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THE WORLD'S BEST NEWS & FACTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

SPORTS
Big winner in World Series
p18

NEWS
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ANIMALS
How clever are border collies?
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Making sense of the world

THE WEEK Junior

THE BEST MAGAZINE FOR CURIOUS KIDS

KIDS SPEAK OUT!

The results of our annual survey reveal what's on the minds of young people across America p12

DID YOU KNOW?
The Caribbean region includes more than 20 countries, islands, and territories located in or near the Caribbean Sea.

A home in Cuba after the hurricane

How you can help

If you would like to help people affected by Hurricane Melissa, your family could donate to one of many organizations that are assisting with the recovery. These include the World Food Program, run by the UN; Project HOPE, a nonprofit distributing medical supplies, toiletries, and water; and Direct Relief, which is sending medical aid.

Recovery begins after Hurricane Melissa

Several countries in the Caribbean have started a lengthy recovery following a hurricane that was one of the most powerful to ever strike the region.

What happened?

Hurricane Melissa began as a tropical storm on October 21. Within six days, it became a Category 5 hurricane (the most powerful category), with winds reaching a steady speed of 185 mph. The hurricane struck Jamaica on October 28, then hit Cuba on October 29 as a Category 3 storm, with sustained winds of 120 mph. The hurricane moved on to the Bahamas later that day, hammering the island nation with winds of 76 mph and up to 10 inches of precipitation. Although Melissa didn't directly hit Haiti and the Dominican Republic, it caused up to 40 inches of rain to fall on those countries.

What was the damage?

High winds tore roofs off homes and flattened buildings, while heavy rainfall led to widespread flooding and landslides. In western Jamaica, Melissa uprooted trees and toppled power lines, knocking out electricity for up to 77% of the island and damaging or destroying hospitals, government buildings, and schools. In Cuba, nearly 900,000 people were ordered to evacuate. About 240 communities were cut off by blocked mountain roads, and more than 60,000 homes were damaged or destroyed. In Haiti, about 15,000 people took refuge in shelters. The storm caused the deaths of more than 60 people, including 28 in Jamaica and at least 25 in Haiti. It broke up on October 31 as it passed the coast of Newfoundland, Canada.

A map of the region

Why was this storm so severe?

Melissa was the first Category 5 hurricane to make landfall in the Atlantic Ocean since 2019, and it tied for the strongest hurricane ever to strike land in the region. Weather experts said Melissa's intensity could be attributed to climate change because warmer oceans and air make storms more powerful. This storm gained strength from the Caribbean Sea, which was about 2.5° Fahrenheit warmer than average for late October. Melissa was also unusually slow moving, covering as little as two miles in an hour, which is slower than an average person walks. When storms move slowly and linger in an area, they have time to drop more rain than if they passed over quickly. The countries in Hurricane Melissa's path received massive amounts of rainfall that caused flooding.

How are people being helped?

Rescue and aid workers spread out across Jamaica to bring food and water to communities that were cut off by the storm. Jamaica's government set up field hospitals in the hardest-hit areas and distributed care packages at disaster relief sites. Crews began clearing roads so aid could be distributed more easily and worked to reopen an airport that had been closed. The United Nations (group of 193 countries) sent aid, including 2,000 boxes of emergency food supplies, and teams to assist. The US sent a disaster assistance response team, including three military helicopters, to help distribute aid. World Central Kitchen, a nonprofit that responds to crisis situations around the world, set up operations in Jamaica to serve hot meals. The International Red Cross and other major humanitarian organizations are offering shelter, supplies, and support in the region (see the box above).

What will happen next?

As *The Week Junior* went to press on November 4, rescue and aid crews were still trying to reach the hardest-hit parts of Jamaica, Cuba, and other countries in Melissa's path. Government agencies and humanitarian organizations will continue with efforts to assess damage and identify the most urgent needs.

Japan will donate cherry trees to US

To honor the 250th anniversary of America's founding in 2026, Japan will give 250 cherry blossom trees to the US. Sanae Takaichi, the newly elected prime minister of Japan, made the announcement on October 28 during a meeting with President Donald Trump.

Cherry blossom trees are known for their pink and white flowers. They are not native to the US, but in 1909, Japan offered 2,000 of them as a symbol of friendship between the nations. Those trees did not survive, but Japan sent 3,020 more, which were planted on the banks of the Tidal Basin in Washington, DC, in 1912. Today, thousands of people visit the city every spring to see the trees in bloom during the National Cherry Blossom Festival.

Once the new trees arrive, they will be planted around the Tidal Basin, the US National Arboretum, and Anacostia Park. They will take a few years to mature. Takaichi also announced a gift of fireworks to be used during 250th birthday celebrations in the nation's capital next year.

A cherry blossom tree

LONG HISTORY

The Louvre was a royal palace that became a museum in 1793 and now has 35,000 works of art on display.

An emerald and diamond necklace stolen in the robbery

Arrests made in Louvre jewel heist

Authorities in Paris, France, filed criminal charges against four people arrested in connection with a jewel heist at the Louvre Museum, the world's most-visited museum. The stolen treasures, which together are worth more than $100 million, have not been recovered.

The arrests are a breakthrough in a crime that shocked people around the world. On the morning of October 19, two thieves used a truck-mounted ladder to reach a second-floor balcony of the museum. They cut through a window with power tools and climbed into the Apollo Gallery, which contained a collection of French royal jewels.

The thieves smashed two high-security display cases and, as security alarms blared, stole eight pieces of jewelry worn by queens and empresses in the 1800s—including tiaras, necklaces, earrings, and a brooch. They escaped on motor scooters driven by accomplices just before police arrived. The entire theft took seven minutes.

After the robbery, French president Emmanuel Macron called it "an attack on a heritage that we cherish." Laurent Nuñez, France's interior minister, said, "Beyond their market value, the items have inestimable heritage and historical value."

About 100 investigators continue to search for the stolen jewels. They are collecting evidence, including DNA (chemical that carries all the information about a living thing and can be used to identify them), fingerprints, video surveillance, and mobile phone tracking. "Brick by brick, the investigation is being built and tightening around those who may be involved," said Laure Beccuau, the top prosecutor in Paris.

IT'S AN AMAZING WEEK FOR...

WELCOME ADDITIONS

Two capybara pups were born to a mother named Buttercup at the Cape May County Park & Zoo in New Jersey, and they'll soon have company. The zoo said another capybara mom, Marigold, will deliver her pups any day now.

The pups

The ISS

AN ANNIVERSARY IN SPACE

On November 2, the International Space Station (ISS) marked 25 years of being continuously occupied. Run by NASA and other space agencies, the ISS has hosted 290 people from 26 nations. A space expert called it "one of the most remarkable achievements of the modern age."

GENEROUS GIFTS

Award-winning singer-songwriter Billie Eilish has pledged to donate $11.5 million to support people and organizations that are working to cut carbon pollution, fight climate change, and increase access to healthy food. When her donation was announced, the 23-year-old said, "If you have money, it would be great to use it for good things."

Billie Eilish

ON THE COVER: GETTY IMAGES (4); BANDAI NAMCO; LA DODGERS; ON THIS PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (3); CAPE MAY COUNTY PARK & ZOO; ROSCOSMOS/NASA; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (2)

DID YOU KNOW?
The average monthly SNAP payment is $187 per person, which allows for about $1.63 per meal.

A sign at a store indicating it accepts payment through SNAP

Giving to food pantries

Local food pantries always need donations, regardless of what happens with SNAP. In addition to food, necessities such as toilet paper, which aren't covered by SNAP, are also accepted. If your family would like to help, you can find a local program near you by entering your zip code at findhelp.org or feedingamerica.org.

Uncertainty over government food program

Amid the federal government shutdown that began on October 1, widespread confusion and concern over SNAP, a national food assistance program, has arisen.

What is SNAP?

SNAP, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, was founded in 1964 and is America's largest anti-hunger program. Funded and administered by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA), SNAP provides money for about 42 million low-income people (1 in 8 Americans) to buy food. To qualify, a family of four must have a household income that falls below the federal poverty line, which is about $32,000 a year. Nearly 39% of recipients are children. The government spends about $8 billion per month to fund SNAP benefits.

What happened?

When members of Congress (the branch of government that makes laws) couldn't agree on an annual budget, the federal government shut down. As a result, SNAP ran out of money on November 1. The USDA had $5 billion set aside that could be used to extend SNAP, but it said that money was for emergencies, such as natural disasters. On October 28, a total of 25 states and the District of Columbia filed a lawsuit (legal dispute) in Massachusetts against the Trump administration for not forcing the USDA to use its emergency funds. Several cities and nonprofit groups filed a similar lawsuit in Rhode Island.

What were the rulings?

In Massachusetts, US District Judge Indira Talwani ruled that suspending SNAP funds is unlawful and the government must use emergency funding to continue it. In Rhode Island, US District Chief Judge John J. McConnell Jr. ordered the government to fund SNAP with emergency reserves, with payments to recipients due on November 5. Because the $5 billion in emergency funds isn't enough to cover SNAP's costs for November, he also directed officials to seek another source of money so full benefits can be paid.

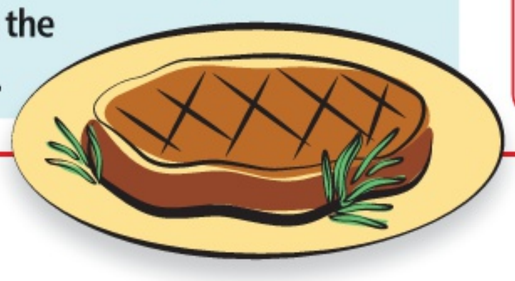
What will happen next?

When *The Week Junior* went to press on November 4, the government said it would pay out half of the amount that SNAP recipients usually get and there could be lengthy delays before they receive it. Many food pantries said they will increase their efforts to provide food assistance (see box above). The government shutdown also continued.

WORD OF THE WEEK

MEAT

For the Anglo-Saxons, the word "meat" described all food. As the variety of foods increased and new terms were needed, "flesh-meat" was used to describe food from animals, "green-meat" meant vegetables, and "sweet-meat" was for anything sweet. Eventually, "meat" came to only describe food made from the flesh of animals.



THE WEEK IN HISTORY

November 18, 1963
First push-button telephones used

On November 18, 1963, the first push-button telephone went into service. Before that, rotary phones were used. With a rotary phone, a caller had to fully turn the telephone dial for each numeral in a phone number. The new phones were instantly popular because they were easier to use. Studies showed that it took half the time to make a call with a push-button phone.

The jet

Supersonic jet makes test flight

A jet designed to fly faster than the speed of sound made its first test flight in California, traveling up to 230 miles per hour. The X-59 was built by NASA, the US space agency, with the goal of breaking the sound barrier without producing a loud boom. While the X-59's test flight didn't break the speed of sound, which happens when a plane goes at least 761 miles per hour, scientists hope the jet is the first step to creating faster and quieter air travel.

Word of the year announced

Dictionary.com has chosen 67 (pronounced six-seven) as its word of the year. The term, which has exploded in popularity with kids, could mean "so-so" or "maybe this, maybe that." When spoken it's often accompanied by a juggling hands gesture. Dictionary.com acknowledged it wasn't sure of 67's exact meaning or origin and said it's more of an inside joke among young people.

Holiday tree is chosen

The tree

A 75-foot-tall Norway spruce grown in East Greenbush, New York, will be the 2025 Rockefeller Center Christmas tree. "As soon as I saw it, I knew it was perfect," said Erik Pauze, the center's gardener. When it arrives in New York City, it will be decorated with more than 50,000 lights and topped with a 900-pound crystal star. A new tree will be planted in its place. The lighting ceremony will air on NBC on December 3.

BIG FISH
Chinook salmon can grow to be more than 4 feet long and weigh more than 120 pounds.

A view of the Klamath River

Salmon return upstream to Oregon river

For the first time in more than 100 years, salmon have been observed in the northern part of the Klamath River in Oregon. The return of the fish to the area is the result of decades of efforts by wildlife experts and Native American groups, including the Yurok, Karuk, and Klamath tribes.

The Klamath River begins in Oregon and flows for about 260 miles to northern California. It once was one of the biggest sources of salmon on the West Coast, and it had an especially large number of Chinook salmon. However, between 1912 and 1962, four dams (barriers that control the flow of water) were constructed in the river. The dams prevented the salmon from swimming upstream, and they completely disappeared from the habitat.

The four dams were removed from the Klamath in 2023 and 2024, but the salmon still faced obstacles for migrating upstream. Parts of the waterway were polluted with toxic chemicals, for example, and other dams were still in place on the river. Although these have "fish ladders," artificial pools meant to help fish swim upstream, they were built decades ago and were designed for trout, not salmon. Scientists were unsure whether the salmon would be able to navigate them.

Last year, a Chinook salmon was recorded on video using a fish ladder in the upper part of the Klamath. Since then, salmon tagged with radio trackers have been observed even further up the river. Currently, scientists believe there are at least 140 adult salmon reproducing in the northern part of the river.

A Chinook salmon

Experts caution that it will take years for the river's salmon population to fully recover and that pollution is still a health hazard. But the fish's success has nevertheless exceeded expectations. "There were a lot of tears and a little bit of disbelief, seeing how quickly they came back," Paul Wilson, a Klamath tribal member, told *SFGate*.

THE WEEK'S SILLIEST HEADLINE

"Escaped goats become local celebrities in Connecticut" *UPI*

GETTY IMAGES (5); COURTESY OF TISHMAN SPEYER; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (4)

Around the world

One of the protests

Tanzania
Protests over election

Several days of protests took place after an election in Tanzania. The current president, Samia Suluhu Hassan, was declared the winner with nearly 98% of the vote, but protesters said her two main opponents were unfairly banned from running. Many protesters were also angry about difficult economic conditions and high unemployment among young people. Hundreds of people were killed in clashes with security forces at the marches.

A sign for the event

Belém, Brazil
Countdown to climate conference

Preparations are underway for an important world climate conference. COP30, set to take place in Belém from November 10–21, brings world leaders together to discuss how to address climate change. Many of the leaders will begin meeting on November 6 and 7. The event has already caused controversy because a section of the Amazon rainforest was cleared to build a road for the conference.

The gem

Botswana
Rare diamond unearthed

Miners have discovered a rare two-colored diamond. The half-pink, half-colorless gem weighs 37.4 carats (about a quarter of an ounce). Diamonds are minerals made from carbon more than 100 miles below the Earth's surface. Experts think this stone was formed in two stages, starting with the pink half first. Pink diamonds are very rare, and how they form is still unknown.

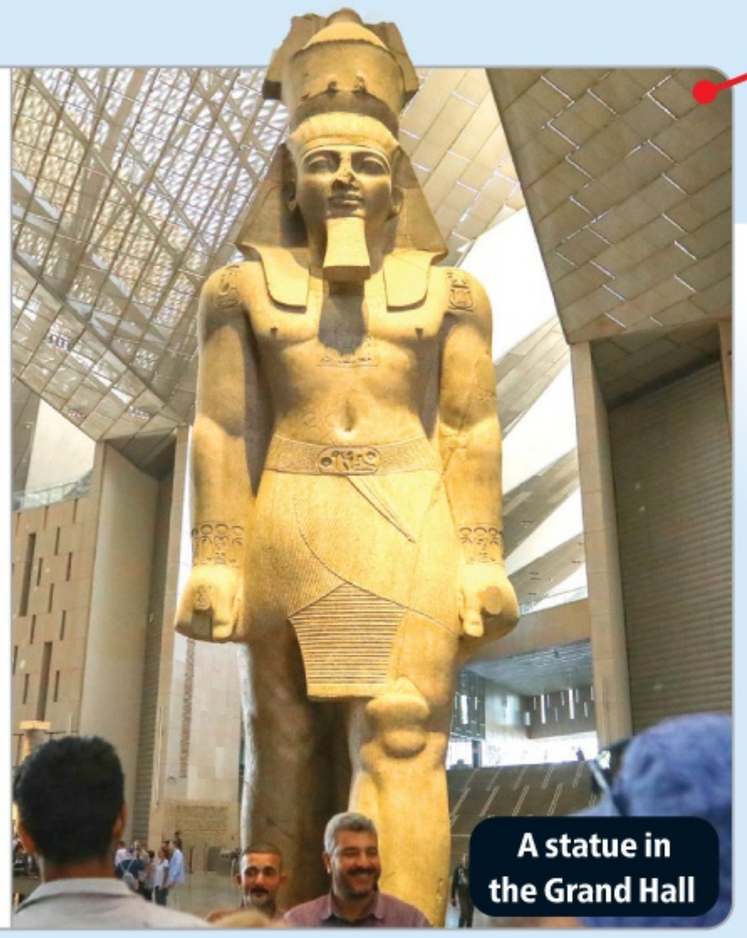
Vatican City
Artifacts to be returned

By the end of 2025, officials say the Vatican will return items to some of Canada's Indigenous communities (first people to inhabit a place). The items, including masks and a kayak, are now in the Anima Mundi museum. Most were taken from Canada and sent to a 1925 exhibition. Indigenous leaders have asked for their return.

An exhibit in the museum

Giza, Egypt
Museum opens

After partially opening last year, the Grand Egyptian Museum marked its full opening with a gala ceremony on November 1. Among the artifacts unveiled was the full collection of more than 5,000 treasures from the tomb of Tutankhamun, the boy king who ruled from 1333 to 1323 BCE, displayed together for the first time. "We are writing a new chapter in the story of this ancient nation's present and future," said Abdel Fattah El-Sissi, president of Egypt.


A statue in the Grand Hall

GETTY IMAGES (6); ALAMY (2); REUTERS; TEBOGO HAMBIRA/GEMOLOGICAL INSTITUTE OF AMERICA

Around the world

Surveying the damage

Mazar-e Sharif, Afghanistan
Earthquake strikes

A 6.3 magnitude earthquake struck northern Afghanistan before dawn on November 3, damaging homes and a historic mosque. At least 27 people were killed, and more than 950 were injured. The United Nations (group of 193 nations) is delivering aid. An earthquake in Afghanistan in August killed more than 2,000 people.

Jiro Ono (right) in 2008

Tokyo, Japan
Famous sushi chef turns 100

Chef Jiro Ono turned 100 years old on October 27. The founder of Sukiyabashi Jiro, a sushi restaurant in Tokyo's Ginza district, Ono has served world leaders and celebrities. In 2007, he was the first sushi chef to earn three Michelin stars, a top honor in the food industry. Now the world's oldest three-star head chef, Ono said he is not ready to retire. At a celebration before his birthday, he said, "I plan to keep going for about five more years."

The road

Dubai, United Arab Emirates
Highway closed for cyclists

On November 2, Dubai's busiest road was closed so cyclists could take part in an annual fitness challenge. More than 40,000 cyclists rode down Sheikh Zayed Road for the Dubai Ride, the first event in the Dubai 30x30. This monthlong challenge encourages people to do 30 minutes of exercise every day in November. Other featured activities will include yoga, running, and stand-up paddleboarding.

Two dogs at work

India
Native dogs join security forces

Indian dog breeds, including Rampur and Mudhol hounds, are serving in the country's security forces for the first time. India's dog squad, created in 1957, previously used European breeds such as German shepherds, but Prime Minister Narendra Modi has urged officials to give native breeds a chance. Now 150 native dogs have joined the police and border security forces.

Barcelona, Spain
Tallest church rises

The Sagrada Familia in Barcelona has been named the tallest church in the world. Construction of the church started in 1882 and is still in progress. After part of its central tower was lifted into place, the building now measures 534 feet at its highest point, surpassing the 530-foot Ulm Minster in Germany. The Sagrada Familia's central Tower of Jesus Christ will reach about 565 feet when it is completed in a few months.

The Sagrada Familia

Should we eat lab-grown meat?

Some say it offers a better alternative to consuming animals raised on farms.

What you need to know

- **Lab-grown meat is made by taking a small sample of cells from a living animal. The cells are grown in a lab and shaped into cuts of meat.**
- **Meat that is grown in a lab is not considered vegetarian because it is made from animal cells.**
- **It was approved for humans to eat in the US in 2023 but has since been restricted or banned in several states, including Alabama, Florida, Indiana, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, and Texas.**

WOW! Scientists produced, cooked, and ate the world's first lab-grown burger in 2013—at a cost of about $325,000.

UPSIDE FOODS

Many environmental advocates say lab-grown meat, which is also known as cell-cultured or cultivated meat, is better for the planet than meat from an animal. That's because raising livestock like cows and pigs requires vast amounts of water, land, and feed and produces a lot of waste and pollution. Although lab-grown meat isn't available for consumers to buy yet, companies that make it say it could be in restaurants and grocery stores within a few years. Some people, however, say there's still so much we don't know about lab-grown food, including its health effects and environmental impact. What do you think? Should we eat lab-grown meat?

Yes—it's best for animals

Lab-grown meat is much better for the planet than large-scale farming of animals. By some estimates, farming animals causes about 14.5% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions, which trap heat in Earth's atmosphere and make temperatures rise. This is a major contributor to climate change. In addition to the environmental aspect, farm animals sometimes live in poor conditions—and killing animals at all is cruel. Lab-grown meat not only solves these problems, but it can be safer too. Animal food and poop can carry bacteria that cause foodborne illnesses. It's easier to limit and control that in a lab than in a barn.

No—it's not a sure bet

This kind of meat has only been briefly served at two restaurants in the US, and it's an ingredient in a pet food in the UK. That means no one knows for sure what its long-term effects might be. The environmental claims about cultivated meat may also be exaggerated. A study at the University of Oxford in the UK found that, in the long run, lab-grown meat might not be better for the environment than farming animals because of the electricity and other resources required to grow the meat in large quantities. Besides, many farmers rely on selling the animals they have raised. Lab-grown meat could put them out of business.

YES Three reasons we should eat lab-grown meat

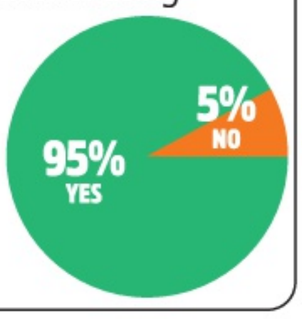
1. **It's much better for the environment and could help reduce greenhouse gas emissions.**
2. **The treatment of animals would improve, and people could eat meat without feeling guilty about harming them.**
3. **It has a lower risk of bacteria because it's made in a controlled environment.**

NO Three reasons we should not eat lab-grown meat

1. **The long-term effects of lab-grown meat on humans or pets are still unknown.**
2. **Some scientists say it might not be better for the environment because it requires a lot of energy to produce.**
3. **If many people start eating lab-grown meat, farmers who raise animals could lose their livelihood.**

LAST WEEK'S POLL

Last week, we asked if we should still use nicknames. Nearly all of you voted in favor of using variations on people's names: 95% said yes, and 5% said no.



What do you think?

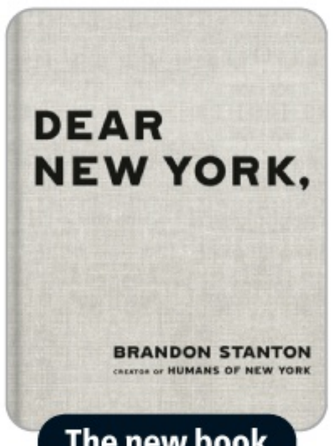
Now that you've read a bit more about this issue, visit kids.theweekjunior.com/polls so you can vote in our debate. Vote YES if you think we should eat lab-grown meat or NO if you don't. We'll publish the results next week.

The goal of the big debate is to present two sides of an issue fairly in order to stimulate discussion and allow our readers to make up their minds. The views on this page do not reflect those of *The Week Junior*, and the page is not funded by third parties.

A passion for pictures

Brandon Stanton connects people by sharing their personal stories.

Photographer Brandon Stanton has spent more than a decade building the global storytelling movement called Humans of New York, a project that shares photos and personal stories of people he meets on the street. Now he is celebrating the city where it all began with his fifth book, *Dear New York*.



The new book

Stanton grew up in Marietta, Georgia, and studied history at the University of Georgia. After college, he worked in finance in Chicago, Illinois. In 2010, he lost his job and moved to New York City with a bold idea: to photograph 10,000 people throughout the city and ask them their story. It evolved into the series Humans of New York on social media and now has more than 30 million followers worldwide.

Over the years, Stanton became a best-selling author of five collections of his photography, beginning with *Humans of New York* in 2013. His newest book, *Dear New York*, is filled with hundreds of portraits and stories collected over two years from across the city's five boroughs. All proceeds from the book support various nonprofits in New York City.

Alongside the book, Stanton unveiled an installation at Grand Central Terminal that ran for two weeks in October, featuring more than 150 digital screens showing portraits and stories from the city. It also included an art showcase with photos taken by more than 600 public school students. Stanton called it "a celebration of people."

Stanton told CBS there are three parts to his mission: "To use my work to provide comfort, improve the lives of other people, and create moments of connection."

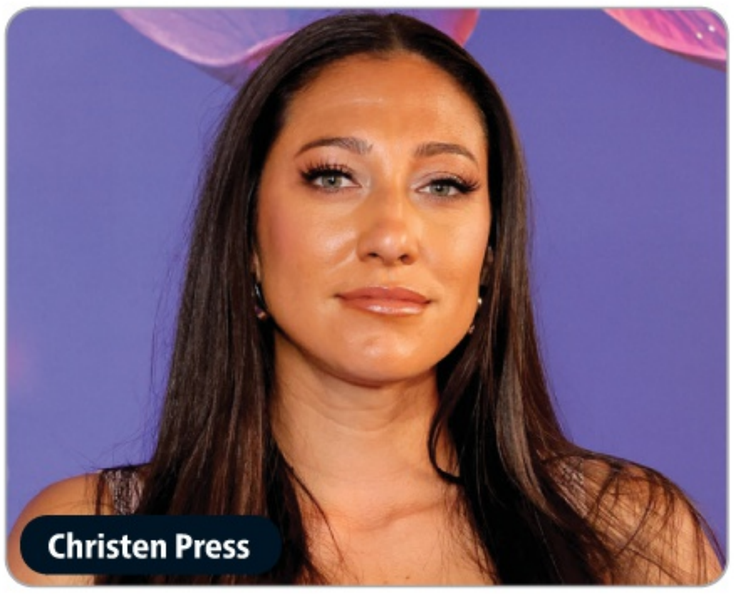
Brandon Stanton

ART ORIGINS
The first known photograph, titled *View from the Window at Le Gras*, was captured in 1826 in France by Joseph Nicéphore Niépce.

A trailblazing anchor

Good Morning America co-anchor Robin Roberts has been honored by Southeastern Louisiana University, where she studied communications. It named its largest student building the Robin Roberts Broadcast Media Center. Roberts got her start at ESPN, at a time when few women worked in sports journalism, before joining ABC's *Good Morning America* in 2005. The new center features studios as well as photos of her life and career. She said the name is not as important as what students can do inside—"making...dreams come true."

Robin Roberts


Christen Press

Soccer star retires

Christen Press has announced that she will retire at the end of the NWSL (National Women's Soccer League) season later this year. Press made her USWNT (US Women's National Team) debut in 2013 and went on to score a total of 64 goals with the team. She also helped them win the 2015 and 2019 FIFA Women's World Cups and earn a bronze medal at the 2021 Tokyo Olympics. She played for several NWSL clubs, most recently Angel City FC. After retiring, she said she plans to focus on the *RE-CAP* sports podcast, which she co-hosts with her wife and former teammate, Tobin Heath.

OVERHEARD

"We can imagine ourselves in places that are not our actual circumstances."

Acclaimed children's book author Jason Reynolds on why he loves comic books, superheroes, and science fiction

SHUTTERSTOCK; BOOK: COURTESY OF PUBLISHER; GETTY IMAGES (3)

GOOD LISTENER
A border collie named Chaser was known as the world's smartest dog—she knew more than 1,000 words.

Border collies show surprising skill.

Brilliant border collies

Border collies are one of the most intelligent dog breeds. Originally bred in Britain to herd sheep, they are good at learning words and following orders. They can also show self-control, stopping themselves from doing things they shouldn't. As pets, they need lots of activities to keep their brains and bodies active.

Dogs can think like humans

Scientists have discovered that some dogs can identify toys based on their purpose, not just on how the objects look. Humans typically learn this skill as children. For example, young children may figure out that both a pen and a crayon can be used for writing, even though they don't look alike. But this ability had not previously been seen in dogs.

In the study, the scientists wanted to see if dogs could tell the difference between toys used for pulling and toys used for fetching, even if they had not seen the toys before. They selected a group of dogs who were "gifted word learners" that could quickly learn the names of objects, like toys. Most of these dogs were border collies.

Harvey, a study participant

The scientists set up the studies in the dogs' homes. Two types of toys were involved: pulls (tugging toys) and fetches (toys that are thrown and retrieved, such as balls). All the toys were different shapes, sizes, and colors, but the owners said "pull" or "fetch" to the dog when playing with a particular toy so the dog would understand which type of toy was being used. The dogs were tested on the names four weeks later.

After this, the dogs got a new fetch toy and a new pull toy to play with, but the owners didn't say the words out loud. The owners then asked the dogs to select the "pull" or "fetch" toy from a pile that included all the toys. The dogs got it right most of the time. The experiment shows that they can label a toy or object in their minds based on its function.

The study's lead author, Claudia Fugazza from Eotvos Lorand University in Hungary, said, "We have shown that dogs learn object labels really fast and they remember them for a long period, even without rehearsing." The next step in the research is to see whether the dogs can still figure out the function of an object even if they haven't been trained to understand its purpose.

PLACE OF THE WEEK

Jaguar National Park, Mexico

Jaguar National Park opened in September 2024 to protect the land and local wildlife in Tulum, Mexico. The park covers more than 2,400 acres of forest and beaches. Jaguars, quetzals, and toucans are part of its vibrant array of wildlife, alongside more than 966 plant species. Near the eastern edge of the park is a group of historic temples and a 26-foot-tall structure called El Castillo, which sailors from the ancient Maya civilization originally used as a lighthouse. Visitors can also snorkel and dive along the coast to see colorful coral, fish, and sea turtles.

A jaguar

DIZZY DEPTHS

Many of the world's oceans contain huge underwater mountains known as seamounts.

Seals and other marine animals could benefit.

Ocean pact to protect seas

An international agreement to protect the high seas is set to become law. The "high seas" refers to parts of the ocean that don't belong to any specific government because they lie beyond any country's boundaries. People have been working on the agreement, known as the High Seas Treaty, for nearly 20 years.

The high seas include about two thirds of the world's oceans. Only 1% of the high seas are legally protected, so marine life in these areas is particularly vulnerable to harmful fishing practices and other destructive human activities.

The treaty will establish a process for creating Marine Protected Areas, similar to national parks on land. These could help species such as sharks, whales, fish, seals, and sea turtles.

A minimum of 60 countries is needed to ratify (sign onto) the High Seas Treaty in order for it to become law. This milestone was achieved on September 19, when Morocco ratified the treaty. A total of 74 countries have now ratified it, along with the European Union (EU, a group of 27 nations). The agreement is set to take effect in January 2026.

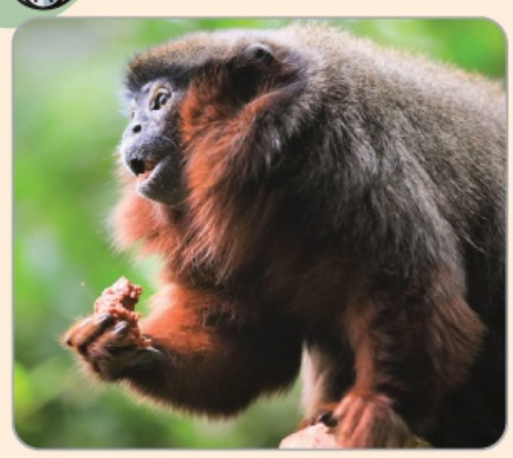
Animal of the week

Kārearea

The kārearea, New Zealand's fastest bird, has won the country's popular Bird of the Year competition for a second time. The contest raises awareness of the challenges facing the nation's native birds, many of which are endangered.

- **LIFESPAN:** Up to 20 years
- **HABITAT:** New Zealand forests
- **SIZE:** 15 to 20 inches
- **DIET:** Insects, mammals, lizards, and birds
- **FUN FACT:** This falcon can fly 125 miles per hour and hunt prey larger than itself.

Good week / Bad week



Coppery titi monkeys

For the first time, a coppery titi monkey was born at Chester Zoo in the UK as part of an international breeding program to save the species. Zookeepers say the baby monkey is healthy and about the size of a golf ball.

Squirrels in cities

Scientists in Finland have discovered that human activity can harm squirrels' ability to solve problems. People walking, biking, and playing nearby may signal danger for squirrels, changing the way they think and act.

Ask an expert

"Why are some jellyfish venomous but some aren't?" Ria, 9, Oregon

Sara Lesser
Education supervisor,
Aquarium of the Pacific

Sea jellies have venomous stinging cells called nematocysts, which allow them to capture food and defend themselves. The strength of the sting varies by jelly. Some are quite painful, or even deadly, to humans. Others, like moon jellies, have a sting so small that humans can't feel it.

A moon jelly

Do you have a question for an animal expert? Send it to *hello@theweekjunior.com*. Find out more about the Aquarium of the Pacific at aquariumofpacific.org.

GETTY IMAGES (2); ALAMY (3); ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (4); CLAUDIA FUGAZZA/CC BY-SA

Kids speak out!

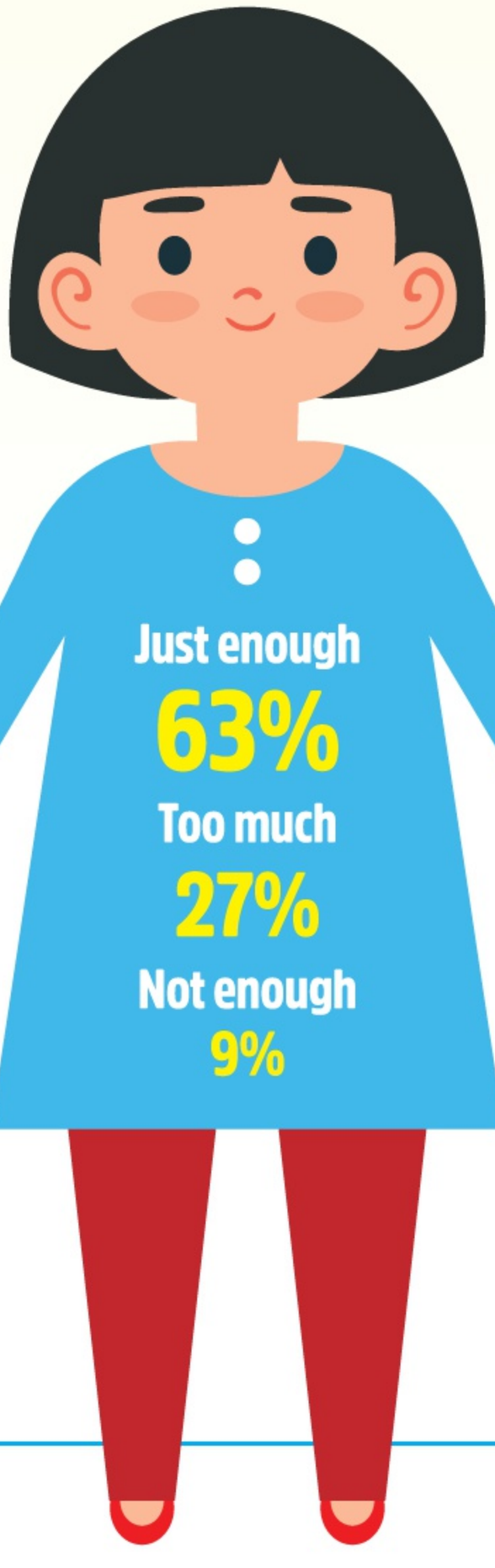
At *The Week Junior*, we know young people care about what's happening in the world around them. They're aware, engaged, and informed—and we always want to hear what they think. That's why we worked with the polling company YouGov to conduct our sixth annual Junior Voices survey. A total of 708 kids, ages 8 to 14, responded from across the country and shared their views and opinions. Here's what they had to say.

How often do you hear about current news?

You're paying attention to what's going on in the world.

- 34% Once every few days
- 33% Every day
- 14% Once a week
- 10% Once every few weeks
- 5% Once a month or less
- 5% Never

In your opinion, you hear about the news...



How often do you talk about the news with other people?

- 52% At least every few days
- 15% Once a week
- 12% Once every few weeks
- 11% Never
- 8% Once a month or less

GETTY IMAGES

Nationwide survey

What are your top sources for current news?

What do you think about the reliability of your news sources?

Many of you have questions about finding information you can trust.

61% Wish you could learn more about how to tell whether news sources are reliable

58% Think you get your news from reliable sources

56% Think it's getting harder to tell which news sources are reliable or unreliable

53% Are aware of biases in the media

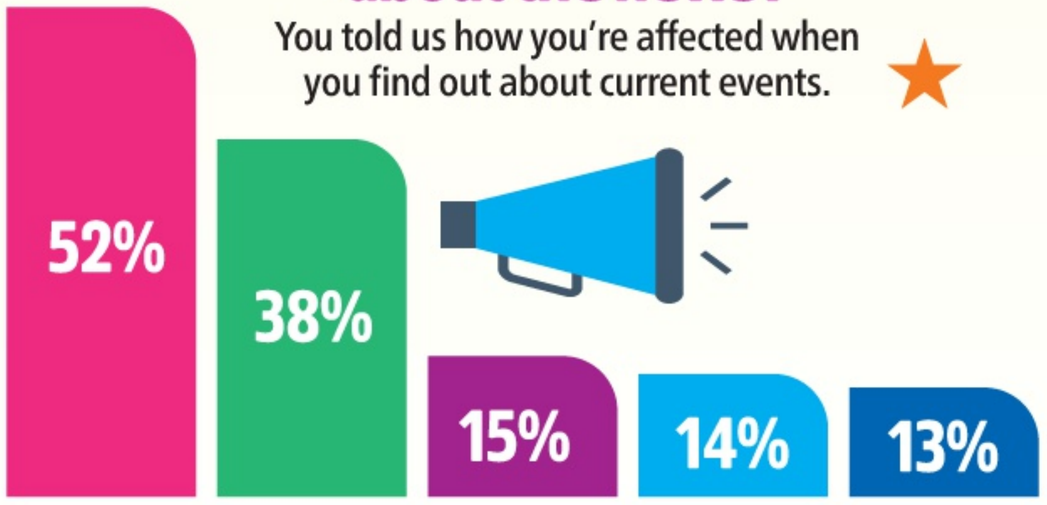
52% Sometimes have trouble figuring out whether a news source or story is reliable

42% Feel you can tell when a news source is reliable

41% Have disagreed with others about whether a news source or story is reliable

How do you feel when you hear about the news?

You told us how you're affected when you find out about current events.



- Concerned about the future
- Curious to learn more about what's happening in the world
- Confident that you know what's happening in the world
- Inspired to take action to make a difference
- Hopeful about the future

What do you do when you hear about difficult or upsetting news?

You have many positive ways of handling your feelings.

1. Talk about it with family or friends
2. Think about how you could help
3. Listen to/ read about good news or something else that makes you feel better
4. Nothing—you don't feel like there's much you can do
5. Ask teachers to talk about it in school
6. Try to raise money, donate supplies, or contribute in other ways
7. Write letters to elected officials to let them know how you feel
8. Do something else

If you could tell the adults of the world ONE THING, what would it be?

"Kids understand more than grown-ups think. It's OK to tell us the hard stuff."

"When you listen to us, it helps us grow up to be confident and kind."

"The people who disagree with your politics aren't as bad as you think."

"Tell the truth even when it is hard."

"Your actions and words shape the future—lead with empathy, patience, and integrity."

"We are going to make this world good. Have faith in us."

YOUGOV PLC SURVEYED 708 CHILDREN AGES 8–14 ONLINE FROM SEPTEMBER 9 TO SEPTEMBER 18, 2025. FIGURES HAVE BEEN WEIGHTED AND ARE REPRESENTATIVE OF US CHILDREN AGES 8–14.

ORIGIN OF A NAME
The name Homo sapiens was first used in 1758 by Carolus Linnaeus, a Swedish scientist and explorer.

An artist's rendering of Homo longi

Just how old are modern humans?

For many years, scientists have believed that modern humans split from their earlier ancestors between 500,000 and 700,000 years ago. After reexamining and digitally reconstructing a crushed skull found in China, however, researchers are challenging this belief. They now think modern humans may trace back more than a million years.

Homo sapiens (modern humans) share a common ancestor with Neanderthals and Denisovans, two species of early humans with large brains. At some point in the past, these three species split off from one another, and Homo sapiens are the only ones that did not go extinct. Pinpointing exactly when the species split off has been difficult.

The Yunxian 2 skull

The skull, known as Yunxian 2, was first found in 1990 in central China and is about a million years old. Yunxian 2 was partly crushed, but based on its age, scientists decided it belonged to a species called Homo erectus, one of the first human ancestors to walk on two legs.

For the new study, a team of scientists in China and the UK used high-resolution 3D scanning and computer modeling to virtually rebuild Yunxian 2. The final model they created had a larger brain case (the part of the skull that holds the brain) and a narrower space between the eye sockets than Homo erectus. This led the team to conclude that Yunxian 2 was not Homo erectus. Instead, it belonged to a group of early human ancestors called Homo longi, which included the Denisovans.

Using Yunxian 2 as a reference point, the scientists proposed a new Homo family tree and determined that the Denisovans are the extinct human species that is most closely related to Homo sapiens. This, they said, meant that if the Denisovans split off at least a million years ago, so did Homo sapiens—about 400,000 years earlier than previously thought.

Scientists who were not involved in the study expressed skepticism about its findings. But Chris Stringer, an anthropologist (scientist who studies human societies and culture in the past and present) and an author of the study, said he and his colleagues will continue their research and will work to gather more evidence to support their new theory.

Who were the Denisovans?

Scientists first discovered Denisovans (pronounced Deh-NEE-suh-vens) in 2010 when they extracted DNA (complex chemical that carries instructions for how a living thing should grow and develop) from fossils found in Denisova Cave in Siberia, Russia (shown above). Few other Denisovan fossils have been uncovered, leaving a large gap in knowledge about who they were and how they lived.

Scientists do know that Denisovans interacted and reproduced with Neanderthals and Homo sapiens. This has been confirmed by the discovery of Denisovan DNA in people alive today, particularly in Asia, the South Pacific region, and Indigenous American populations. People in Papua New Guinea have the highest percentage of Denisovan DNA, about 5%.

Creating an eco-friendly sunscreen with pollen

Sunscreen is important for keeping skin safe from sun damage and preventing skin cancer. The chemical ingredients in many sunscreens, however, can be harmful for marine life. This has inspired scientists to develop a new kind of sunscreen made from flower pollen.

Sunscreen works by using special chemicals that block ultraviolet (UV) light from the Sun's rays, and people often apply it to their skin before going into the ocean or other natural waterways. But the chemicals are washed off by the water and spread into it, affecting the wildlife that lives there. This is especially harmful for coral reefs, which support a wide variety of fish, plants, and other underwater life.

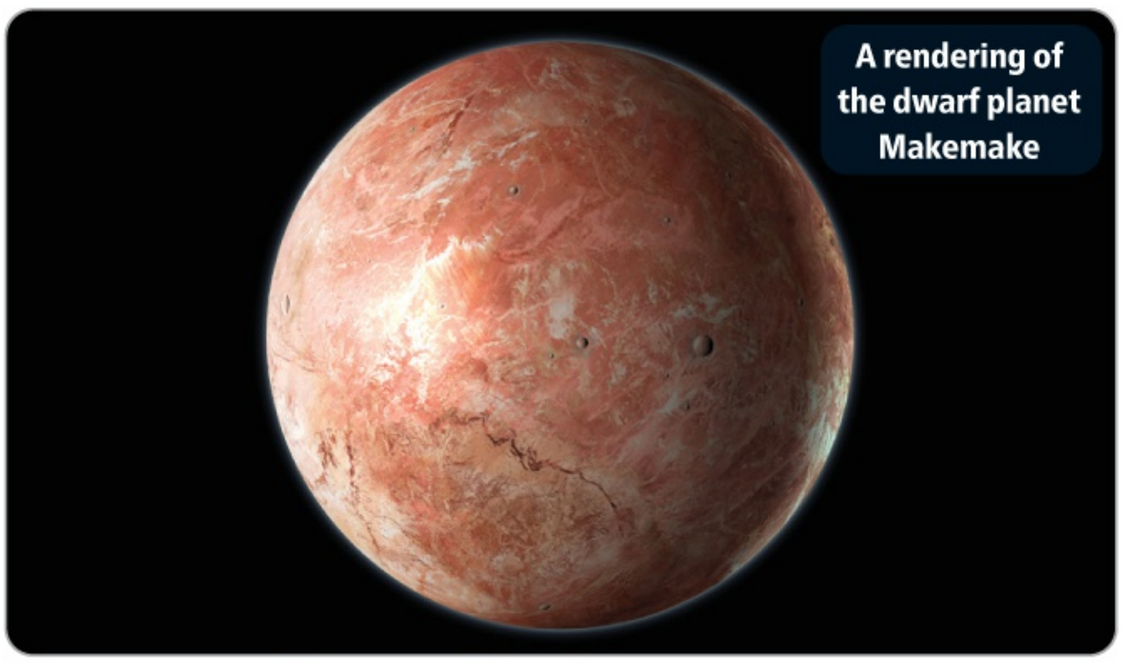
DID YOU KNOW?
About 4,000 to 6,000 tons of sunscreen washes off into the ocean every year.

To find an alternative, scientists from Nanyang Technological University in Singapore turned to pollen, which is known to be resistant to UV light. They developed gels from pollen taken from camellia flowers and sunflowers.

In tests, both of the gels blocked UV light, but the camellia flower gel was especially effective. It was similar to a sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of about 30. The team put samples of the gels in saltwater tanks containing coral, which still appeared healthy after two months.

Researchers will continue their testing to see whether the camellia pollen gel is safe for humans and animals in other environments. If so, it could be available within five years, one of the scientists told Live Science.

A camellia flower


A rendering of the dwarf planet Makemake

Gassy dwarf planet spotted

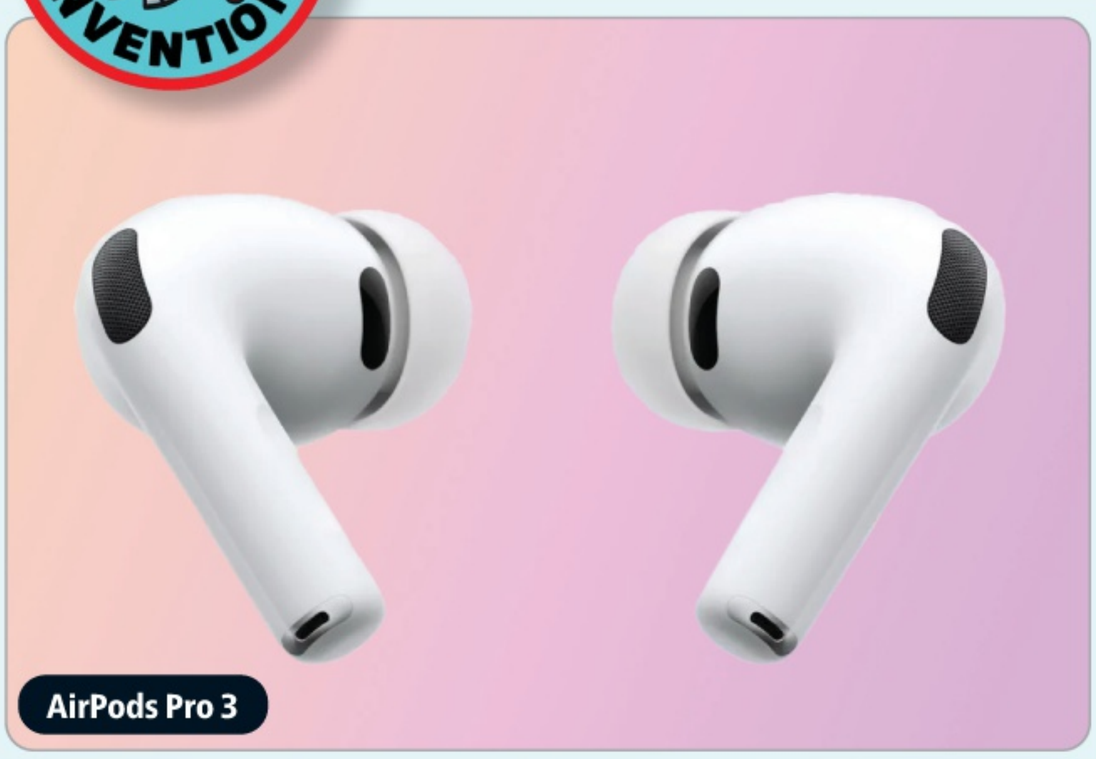
The James Webb Space Telescope has detected faint traces of glowing methane gas coming from a dwarf planet (round object that orbits a star and has debris in its orbit) called Makemake. The only other time gas has been found on an object so far from Earth was on the dwarf planet Pluto in the late 1980s.

Makemake, one of five dwarf planets in our solar system, is located in a region called the Kuiper Belt. While scientists previously knew that Makemake's surface was covered with methane ice, this study shows small amounts of methane gas around the ice. The gas has a temperature of -387° F.

Researchers spotted the gas because it glows faintly after soaking up light from the Sun. They aren't sure where the methane comes from but will attempt to find out. Regardless of the source, they said, the gas means the dwarf planet is more active than previously thought.

AMAZING INVENTION

Earbuds that can translate languages


AirPods Pro 3

New earbuds let people communicate seamlessly despite speaking different languages. Created by Apple, the AirPods Pro 3 use artificial intelligence (AI, when a computer imitates human learning) to quickly translate speech into other languages.

The AirPods Pro 3 capture speech, send it to a phone app that translates it into a chosen language, and play it into the wearer's ears. A transcript also appears on the phone. For now, the system works with several languages, including French, Spanish, and Portuguese.

ON RIGHT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (2); APPLE; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES; GARY TODD/FLICKR; ALAMY

Photos of the week

Blending in
A frog sits in a grapevine in this image taken by Beate Ammer in Australia.

Winging it
Geoff Martin shot this image of a hornbill in South Africa.

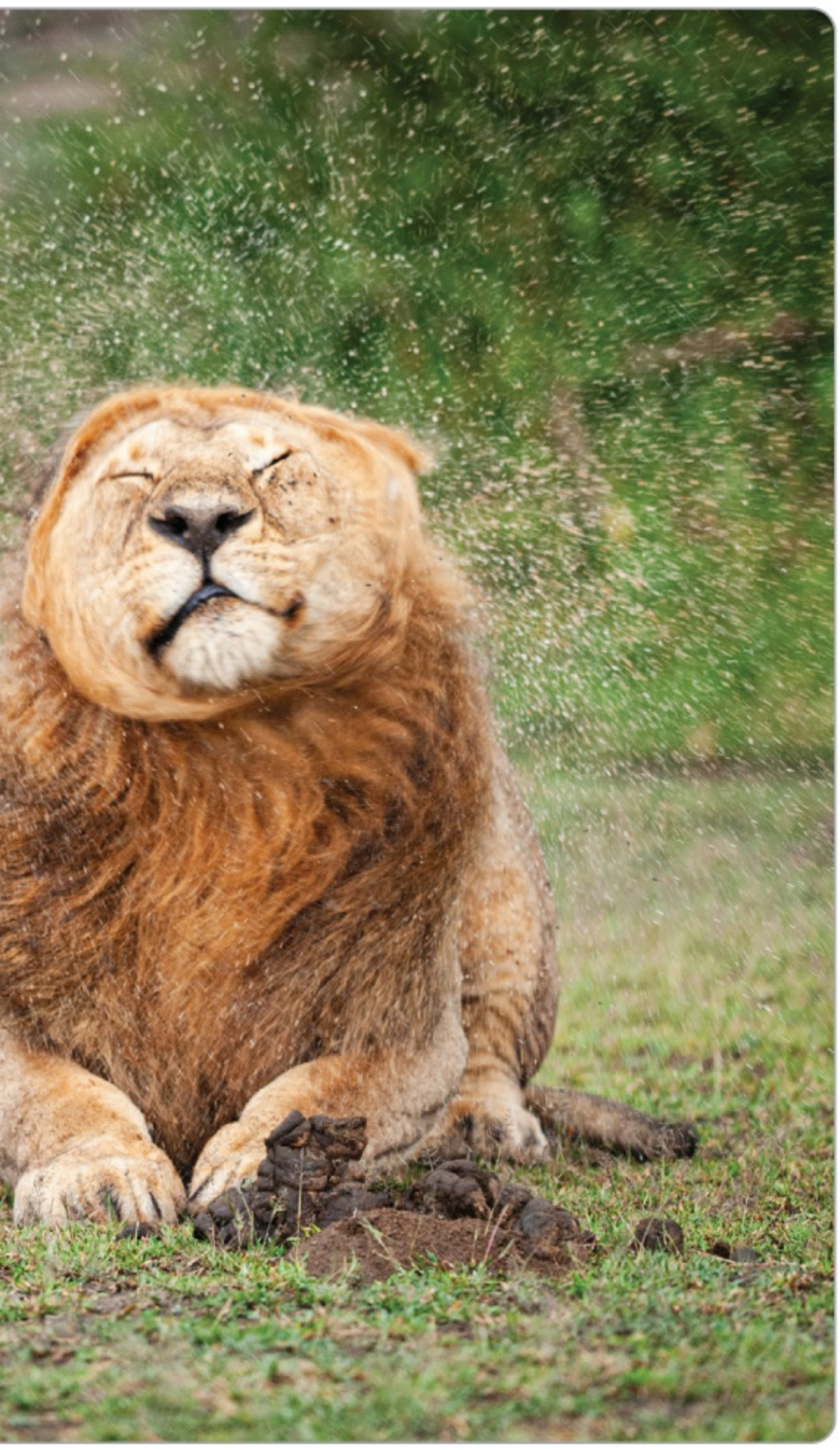
Shake it off
Two lions in a national park in Tanzania were photographed by Massimo Felici.

BEATE AMMER; GEOFF MARTIN; HENRY SZWINTO; MASSIMO FELICI; STEFAN CRUYSBERGHS; WARREN PRICE

Photos of the week

Mighty mouthful
Warren Price took this picture of two bridled guillemots in Norway.

Hide and seek
In Sri Lanka, Henry Szwinto snapped a photo of an Asian elephant flapping its ears.



Taking flight
This shot of a red squirrel was taken in Belgium by Stefan Cruysberghs.

EXTRA EFFORT

The Los Angeles Dodgers have won two of the longest World Series games ever, one based on time and one on innings.

The Dodgers celebrating

A legend retires

Dodgers star pitcher Clayton Kershaw (above) announced in September that he planned to retire this year after 18 MLB seasons. He won three World Series titles, three Cy Young awards (given to the top pitcher in each league), and the 2014 National League MVP award.

Dodgers win World Series again

Major League Baseball's World Series ended on November 1 with a thrilling final game between the Los Angeles Dodgers and the Toronto Blue Jays. The Dodgers won, 5–4, in extra innings to earn the MLB championship title for the second season in a row and the ninth time in franchise history. They are the first repeat champions since 2000.

The World Series began on October 24 in Toronto, Canada. The Blue Jays, who were the best team in the entire American League in the regular season, won Game 1. The Dodgers were the top team in the National League (NL) West in the regular season and the third-seeded (ranked) team in the NL playoffs. They won Game 2 behind a standout complete-game performance by pitcher Yoshinobu Yamamoto.

Yoshinobu Yamamoto

The teams played in Los Angeles for the next three games. Game 3 was a historic contest that lasted 18 innings—twice as long as usual. After six hours and 39 minutes, Dodgers first baseman Freddie Freeman hit a game-ending home run for a 6–5 win. Toronto tied up the series in Game 4, and Blue Jays pitcher Trey Yesavage led his team to a 6–1 win in Game 5 the next day. Yesavage, who is 22 and made his MLB debut in September, struck out 12 batters while allowing no walks, a World Series first. He also set a record for the most strikeouts in a World Series by a rookie.

The teams returned to Canada to finish the series. Game 6 was a must-win for the Dodgers, and Yamamoto was superb again. He threw for six innings and allowed one run in a 3–1 Dodgers win.

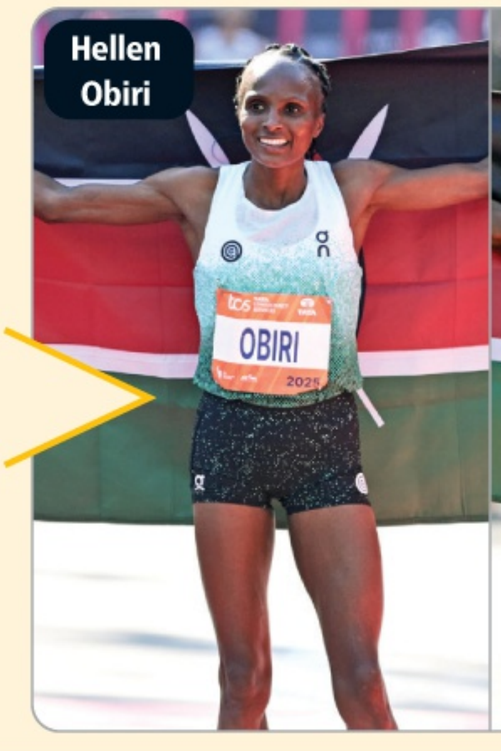
In Game 7, Toronto led 4–2 after seven innings, but the Dodgers tied it up in the top of the ninth. Although Yamamoto had pitched the night before, he returned in the bottom of the ninth and kept Toronto from scoring the game-winning run, forcing extra innings. In the top of the 11th, catcher Will Smith homered to give the Dodgers a 5–4 lead. Yamamoto pitched in the bottom of the 11th, worked out of trouble, and secured the win.

After the game ended, Yamamoto was named the Most Valuable Player of the World Series. In all, he pitched 17⅔ innings, gave up two runs, and struck out 15 batters.

THIS WEEK'S WINNERS...

NEW YORK CITY MARATHON

In the 26.2-mile race on November 2, Hellen Obiri of Kenya won the women's division and set a women's course record, while Benson Kipruto, another Kenyan, won the men's event by .16 seconds. In the wheelchair division, Marcel Hug of Switzerland won his seventh men's race, and Susannah Scaroni of the US won her third women's title. Joel Reichow and Fiona O'Keeffe were the top US finishers.



AUTO RACING

On November 2, Kyle Larson claimed his second NASCAR Cup Series title. He clinched it after a third-place finish at NASCAR's Cup Series Championship at the Phoenix Raceway.

CRICKET

India beat South Africa in the ICC Cricket Women's World Cup final in Navi Mumbai, India, on November 2. This is the team's first Cricket Women's World Cup title. India's Deepti Sharma was named the player of the tournament.

GOING FOR GOALS
For the second year in a row, the NWSL's top scorer was Temwa Chawinga of the Kansas City Current.

Racing Louisville FC vs. Bay FC on November 2

NWSL ends regular-season play

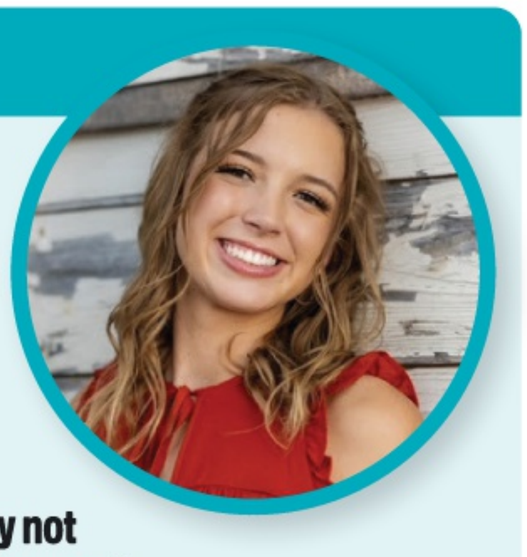
On November 2, the 2025 NWSL (National Women's Soccer League) regular season came to a close on what is known as Decision Day. All 14 teams were in action, with many playoff rankings and two teams' postseason hopes on the line.

Heading into the final weekend, the Kansas City Current had already secured the NWSL Shield, the award given to the team with the best regular-season record. With a 2–1 win over the San Diego Wave FC, they improved their record to 21–2–3. The Washington Spirit finished in second place.

Those two teams were among seven that had clinched playoff positions before Decision Day. Racing Louisville FC and the North Carolina Courage, meanwhile, were trying to earn the one remaining spot. The Courage began Decision Day trailing Racing Louisville by two points (earned through wins and ties) in the standings. They beat Gotham FC, 3–2, but Racing Louisville also won, so the Courage's season ended. Racing Louisville beat Bay FC, 1–0, thanks to a goal by Ella Hase. The team's outstanding defense did not allow Bay FC a single shot on goal. With Gotham's loss, Racing Louisville became the seventh-seeded (ranked) team in the postseason.

The NWSL playoffs are a single-elimination tournament set to begin November 7. The first-round matchups were the Current versus the eighth-seeded Gotham, the Spirit meeting Racing Louisville, the third-seeded Portland Thorns facing the sixth-seeded San Diego, and the fourth-seeded Orlando Pride against the fifth-seeded Seattle Reign FC. The semifinals begin on November 15, and the championship match is on November 22.

COACH OF THE WEEK



Coach's Name: **Alexa McGilvray**

Team: **Tiger Splash (swimming)**

"Coach Alexa is so fun and energetic. I love her for always making swim team fun. I never have a bad day when she is coaching. She taught me so many great things about swimming. Now all my strokes look great! Although she may not be my coach next year because she is pursuing her college degree, I want her to know she will always be my coach and I will remember what she taught me forever. You're the best, Coach Alexa!" Jane, 11, Texas

To nominate a Coach of the Week, send your coach's name, photo, sport, and team to *hello@theweekjunior.com*. Include your name, age, state, and a few reasons why your coach is great.

SPOTLIGHT ON...

TJ Tomlyanovich

AGE: 22 SPORT: TRACK AND FIELD
TEAM: UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS

Getting started I went to a tiny elementary school, so we all played on every team—football, basketball, baseball, track, cross country. In high school, I fell in love with track. There's something so beautiful about how all you need to do is show up, be ready to compete, and try as hard as you can.

Solo effort When I was a junior in high school, my spring track season was shut down due to Covid. I continued training, mostly alone, and in our first meet my senior year, I set school records. I had a good year, which opened the door to running in college. I credit that tireless training.

Mind trick I sometimes do visualizations the day before a big race. I'll sit at the track and picture myself from the start to the finish, staying relaxed.

Special strength So much of this sport is forcing yourself to show up and be uncomfortable. You feel like you can't breathe. There's pain, you're lightheaded, and you're fighting through that.

Major moment My biggest accomplishment was making it to the 2024 Olympic Trials. It was never something I thought was possible for me. It changed my goals and gave me a confidence boost.

Big plans This is my last college track season. I'd like to defend my title as a 400-meter All-American and be a 4 x 400-meter relay national champ. It won't be easy, but they're both absolutely possible.

Wise words Being a kid is about playing all the sports you can, loving what you're doing, meeting new friends, and getting some fresh air.

GETTY IMAGES; ARKANSAS RAZORBACKS ATHLETICS; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (5)

In Your Dreams

Film set in dreamworld

A new comedy adventure follows two siblings who try to keep their family together with help from the magical Sandman.

In pop culture and folklore, the Sandman is a character known for putting kids to sleep and bringing them good dreams. He plays an important role in the animated film *In Your Dreams*, a comedy adventure about a brother and sister who try to meet the Sandman so he can make a dream about their family come true. The movie premieres on Netflix on November 14.

The film's main characters are teen Stevie and her younger brother, Elliot. Stevie is worried her parents are about to split up and that her mother is going to move away for a job. Elliot finds a mysterious book that says the Sandman can make dreams come true, and after Stevie recites a wish from it, the kids go on a journey in their sleep to find the Sandman and keep their family together.

Alex Woo

The film was written and directed by Alex Woo. He told *The Week Junior* he wanted to make a movie set in the world of dreams because of the "creative possibilities." To get ideas for the funny dream scenes, crew members were asked to keep dream journals and share their absurd stories. To make the film relatable, though, Woo needed it to be grounded in reality, so he based it on his own life. When he was young, his mother moved away for a while, and he and his brother "did everything we could to try to find a way to get our parents back together," he said.

An important element of the film is Stevie's relationship with Elliot. She thinks he is annoying, but Stevie ends up realizing how much she needs and loves Elliot. She also learns about letting go of the idea of having a "perfect" life, Woo said, and embracing "the messiness of reality."

More dreamworld stories

Little Nemo: Adventures in Slumberland

A comic strip from the early 1900s, *Little Nemo in Slumberland*, inspired this 1989 film. The movie follows a boy who has to free Slumberland royalty after they are trapped in Nightmareland.

Slumberland

This Netflix film from 2022 was also based on the *Little Nemo* comic strip. This time, Nemo is a girl whose dad gets lost at sea. When she finds a map of Slumberland, she decides to go there in her dreams in hopes of finding him.

Dream Productions

Disney and Pixar released this *Inside Out* spin-off miniseries in 2024. Like the movies, it is set in the mind of a girl named Riley. It revolves around the characters that work at a type of movie studio where her dreams are created.

WOW!
There are about 250 titles in the main *Baby-Sitters Club* book series.

The Baby-sitters Club over the years

A *Baby-sitters Club* musical

The characters from author Ann M. Martin's best-selling series *The Baby-sitters Club* are headed to the stage. Recently, news broke that a musical based on the books is in development and will premiere in 2027. Mark Sonnenblick, who co-wrote the soundtrack for the hit animated musical *KPop Demon Hunters*, is writing the music and lyrics for the show.

The *Baby-sitters Club* books are about middle school friends who start a babysitting business. The first book was published in 1986, and the series was adapted into a 1995 film and two TV shows, including one released in 2020. Martin said of the new adaptation, "I love musicals and am excited to see the adventures of Kristy, Claudia, Mary Anne, and Stacey come to life onstage."

The musical will be set 12 years after the club disbanded. The girls, now age 25, will return to their hometown of Stoneybrook, Connecticut, to keep a promise they made when they were 13. Their reunion helps them rediscover their friendship and face new questions about identity, careers, and the complexities of adulthood.

Ann M. Martin

Sonnenblick told *Deadline* the musical's songs are inspired by artists the characters would have listened to in the 1980s and 1990s, such as Sheryl Crow, Indigo Girls, and Shania Twain. He said the goal is for audiences to feel like they're "hanging out with the club in Stoneybrook."

The story in the show is by Kate Wetherhead, who co-wrote the stage adaptation of the film *The Devil Wears Prada*. *The Baby-sitters Club* is being written for young people and adults, and she said she hopes audiences will "see that they are not alone in the grand adventure of growing up."

READER RECOMMENDS

Meet the Robinsons *PG (Disney+ or rent on other platforms)*

"This film is about a 12-year-old, Lewis, who lives in an orphanage and dreams of becoming an inventor when he grows up. At his school's science fair, Lewis proudly presents one of his inventions, but things go wrong when a villain, the Bowler Hat Guy, shows up and sabotages the invention. Then a mysterious boy named Wilbur Robinson arrives from the future and takes Lewis to the year 2037 to meet his family. Together, they chase the Bowler Hat Guy through time, uncovering secrets that connect the past and the future." Jackson, 11, New Jersey

Do you have a film or TV show to recommend to other kids? Send your review to *hello@theweekjunior.com*.

THIS WEEK'S WATCH LIST

Holiday Baking Championship
(Food Network)

In the new 12th season of this competition series, two teams of bakers are presented with challenges that include creating snow day desserts and "Chrismukkah" platters. Judges decide who advances each week and who will win $25,000 and other prizes.

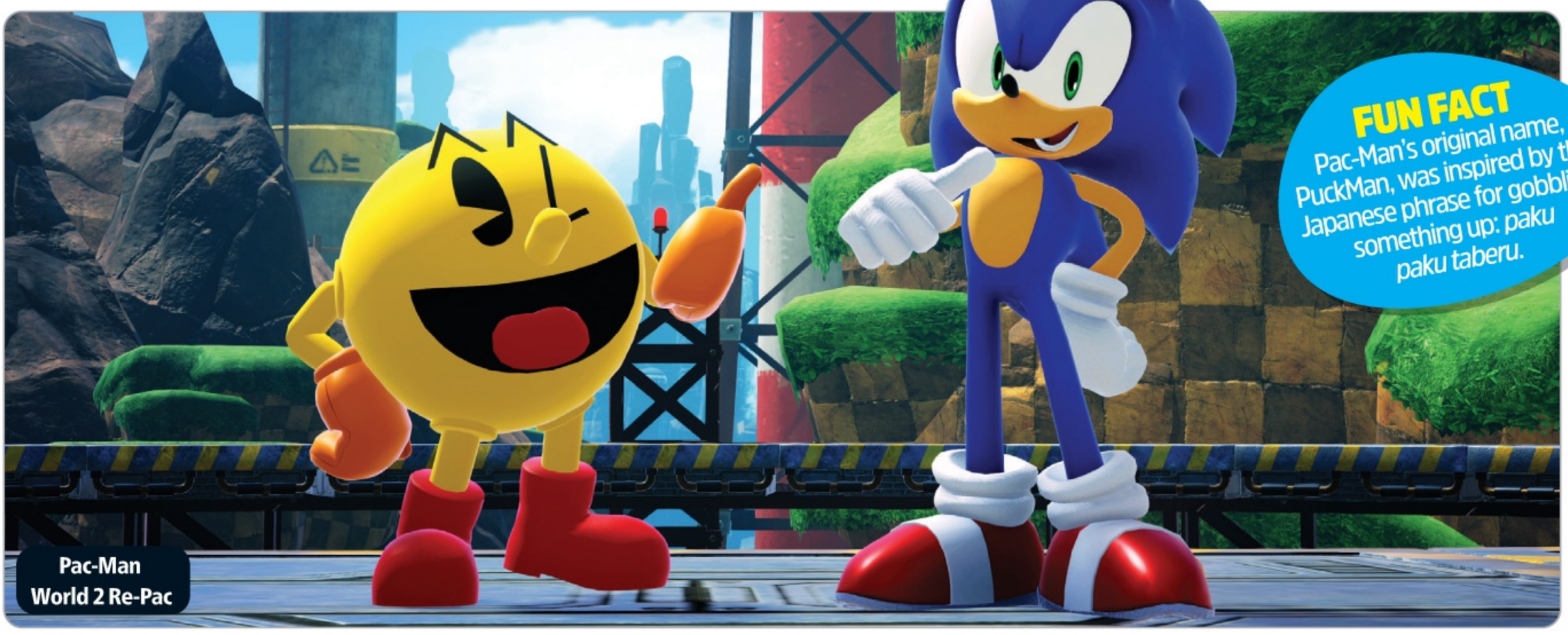
The Bad Guys: Breaking In
(Netflix)

Based on the popular *Bad Guys* books and films, this new series shows how the infamous animal gang got their start. You'll see Mr. Wolf, Mr. Snake, Mr. Shark, Mr. Piranha, and Ms. Tarantula attempt daring heists to try to get on the "Worst of the Worst" list.

The Pigeon Hustle
(PBS)

Funny actor Bobby Moynihan (*The Secret Life of Pets*) narrates this documentary special about pigeon life in New York City and London, England. The show reveals amazing pigeon behaviors, such as hatching chicks under hidden bridges and mapping out entire cities in their minds.

TWTHEATRICALS; ALAMY (2); SCHOLASTIC; GETTY IMAGES; DISNEY; DISCOVERY, INC.; DREAMWORKS; FERGUS GILL/MARAMEDIA LTD.; ON LEFT PAGE: NETFLIX (2); GETTY IMAGES; HEMDALE FILM CORPORATION; DISNEY/PIXAR



FUN FACT
Pac-Man's original name, PuckMan, was inspired by the Japanese phrase for gobbling something up: paku paku taberu.

Pac-Man World 2 Re-Pac

An adventure in Pac-Land

Pac-Man World 2 Re-Pac is a new platform arcade game. It is out now for the Nintendo Switch systems, PlayStation platforms, Xbox consoles, and PC.

The first Pac-Man game arrived in US arcades in 1980. It introduced players to a 2D character that chomped pellets and fruit in a maze while being chased by ghosts. The game was a huge hit, and Pac-Man has since starred in more than 80 sequels and spin-offs.

This new game is a remake of Pac-Man World 2, which was released in 2002. It takes the character out of the 2D maze and sets him loose in 3D Pac-Land. It is filled with six exciting environments that include snowy mountains, active volcanoes, and vast oceans, and each one has its own big boss battles. The game also features side missions and bonus items to unlock.

Instead of being the classic 2D head, Pac-Man in this world has arms and legs, and he can do special moves, including one called the Super Butt Bounce. He also can swim in the ocean, skate on ice, and control a submarine. Among the game's other new features is a target that helps you know where Pac-Man will land when he makes a jump. With the game's new two-player mode, you can go on Pac-Land adventures with a friend.

This winter, Pac-Man World 2 Re-Pac will be getting a fun update. Through downloadable content, players will be able to add a level inspired by Sonic the Hedgehog to the game. It will allow Pac-Man to wear a Sonic costume, zip around like the Blue Blur, and face some of his enemies.

PODCAST OF THE WEEK

BEDTIME SAFARI

Major podcast platforms

The short, calming bedtime stories in this podcast take listeners around the world to explore nature, animals, and cultures. Episodes have had stories about glaciers in New Zealand, giant tortoises along the Seychelles islands, medieval castles in Romania, and wildlife in Western Canada.

APP OF THE WEEK

PINE HEARTS

Apple App Store, Google Play, Nintendo Switch

In this hiking adventure game, you play as Tyke, a boy returning to the nature reserve where he spent time as a child. As he explores familiar places, he encounters ghosts and takes on quests such as judging a vegetable contest, conducting a brass band, and rebuilding a whale-watching boat.

VIDEO OF THE WEEK

LEGO PANCAKE

tinyurl.com/TWJUS-LegoPancake

This fun cooking video uses Lego bricks and stop-motion animation to show how pancakes are made. You'll see real items transform into little bricks, and you can also enjoy listening to the ASMR sound effects for egg-cracking, mixing, and other kitchen tasks.

BANDAI NAMCO (2); BEDTIME HISTORY; HYPER LUMINAL GAMES; TOMOSTEEN VIA YOUTUBE

BOOK OF THE WEEK

Bunns Rabbit

By Alan Barillaro

(Candlewick)

Bunns is born with ears that are much smaller than other rabbits' ears. Although she can hear perfectly well, Bunns' parents keep her hidden in their burrow, hoping her ears will grow in the next few months. They're worried that the other rabbits that live near them will think Bunns' ears will bring them bad luck. When Bunns is finally allowed to go outside, the other rabbits stare at her. Upset by their actions, Bunns follows a monarch butterfly to the edge of the forest and is greeted by Spirit Fox. Unfortunately, because the rabbits believe Spirit Fox foretells danger, Bunns and her family are asked to leave the meadow. That night, Bunns dreams that Spirit Fox will save her family and grant her one wish if she leaves the meadow by herself before sunrise. When she wakes up, a butterfly is flying above her head, ready to show her the way. She sneaks out of the burrow, but her journey to Spirit Fox isn't at all what she expects. Filled with twists and turns, this adventure story contains an exciting mix of graphic novel panels, prose, and exquisite illustrations. *Ages 8-12*

ASK THE AUTHOR

Alan Barillaro

We spoke to the author of the Book of the Week.

What inspired this book?
I wanted to create a story that was a mix between a graphic novel and a chapter book.

How would you describe Bunns in three words?
Empathetic. Brave. Kindhearted.

Why did you choose a rabbit to be the main character?
There was a rabbit that kept hopping into my yard each morning, and it captured my imagination. It managed to avoid the fox that would also wander through my yard from time to time.

You're also an animator. What is that like?
Creating 24 unique drawings for each second of film takes patience. My short film, *Piper,* was less than six minutes long and took three and a half years to make.

Favorite animal?
It's definitely rabbits—until my next story.

READER RECOMMENDS

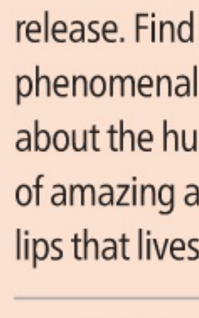
Renegades *By Marissa Meyer*

"Nova is part of a group of supervillains called the Anarchists, and they are determined to take down the Renegades, a group of superheroes. Along the way, she meets Adrian, a Renegade, and becomes very conflicted about where her loyalties lie. This book is action-packed. It has phenomenal characters, and there are so many interesting twists that I never saw coming." Karielle, 12, California

Do you have a book to recommend? Send your review to *hello@theweekjunior.com*.

4 new books packed with amazing facts

These 2026 almanacs and record books capture unforgettable highlights.

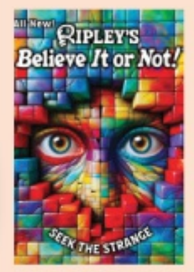


Guinness World Records 2026

By Guinness World Records

(Guinness World Records)

This edition lists thousands of new records that have been set—ranging from the most items in a collection of Polly Pockets (534) to the longest ears on a donkey (13 inches). It also has a section of achievements by kids ages 16 and younger. *Ages 8 and up*



Ripley's Believe It or Not! Seek the Strange

By Ripley's Believe It or Not

(Ripley's Publishing)

Strange stories that go beyond the ordinary are the focus of this annual release. Find out about historic wonders, phenomenal circus feats, and unusual facts about the human body. Also check out photos of amazing animals, like a frog with bright red lips that lives in Ecuador. *Ages 8 and up*

Scholastic Book of World Records 2026

By Scholastic

(Scholastic)

Discover pop culture facts about top artists and the most-streamed songs with this new edition. It also includes sections on animals, technology, and sports. One chapter has stats about each US state. Did you know Florida is the only state where alligators and crocodiles live side by side? *Ages 7–10*

Scholastic Year in Sports 2026

By James Buckley

(Scholastic)

This book is full of action photos and features unusual wins you may not know about. For example, it gives a shout-out to San Marino, a tiny country in Europe, because its soccer team broke a 20-year losing streak. It also highlights achievements in basketball, football, and other sports. *Ages 8–12*

BOOKS: COURTESY THE PUBLISHERS; AUTHOR: COURTESY OF ALAN BARILLARO; GETTY IMAGES

DID YOU KNOW?
Food is the most common material sent to the nation's landfills, making up 24% of waste.

Try composting at home

Find out how to dispose of food scraps and more to help the environment.

You may have heard the word "composting," but what does it mean? Composting is similar to recycling—it's disposing of organic food waste in a way that allows it to break down naturally instead of being buried in landfills. When you compost food scraps instead of throwing them in the trash, that organic waste is processed into nutrient-rich soil that farmers and gardeners can use to grow new plants. It's a planet-friendly cycle, and you can participate by following a few easy steps. Here's how.

Research your town's rules

Some large cities in the US—such as New York, San Francisco, and Seattle—have made it a legal requirement to compost, providing special bins where people can put their food scraps. Other towns may have a drop-off spot for compost or a composting facility. To find out more, search online for your town name, state, and the word "composting."

Learn what to compost

"Green" waste such as fruits, vegetables, eggshells, and coffee grounds and "brown" waste like leaves, twigs, cardboard, and used paper plates are commonly accepted for composting. With an adult's help, check the rules for composting near you.

Pick a spot to compost

With your family, decide what kind of container to use for compost and where you'll store it. You can keep it simple by using a mixing bowl where you can toss kitchen scraps as you prepare meals. Be sure to cover the bowl with a plate to reduce odors and avoid attracting fruit flies. You can also buy a countertop compost container.

Your food scraps can nourish soil.

Make it part of a routine

Because your container of food scraps will fill up pretty quickly, you and your family will likely want to bring it to your local drop-off site regularly. You can get into the habit of heading to the compost bin on the same day each week.

Spread the word

Once you've started collecting and dropping off your food scraps, encourage other family members, friends, and neighbors to do it too. Share your composting success with your teacher and show them the box at right. You'll feel great knowing you're doing something to keep the Earth healthier!

Students in action

Composting is catching on in many US schools. Here are a few examples of where and how.

Classrooms Teachers supervise students in the care of "worm bins." Worms eat lunch scraps, like fruit or vegetable peels, and turn them into compost.

Cafeterias In New York City's public schools, students dispose of food waste, napkins, and other material in bins. The items are then collected for composting.

Clubs Some schools have compost clubs or "green teams" that teach students the benefits of compost, like using it to enrich the soil of a school garden.

FAVORITE LUNCH
"Senate Bean Soup," made with ham and navy beans, has been on the US Senate dining room menu for more than 100 years.

WARNING!
Ask an adult's permission before using the stove.

Stir up a hearty pot of delicious bean soup

Ingredients

- One 15-ounce can of beans of your choice (such as navy, kidney, chickpeas, cannellini, pinto, or black)
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- Optional: 2 thick slices ham, chopped
- 1 celery stalk, chopped
- 1 carrot, chopped
- ½ small onion, chopped
- 1 garlic clove, chopped
- 1 teaspoon dried Italian seasoning blend
- 2 cups water or vegetable or chicken stock

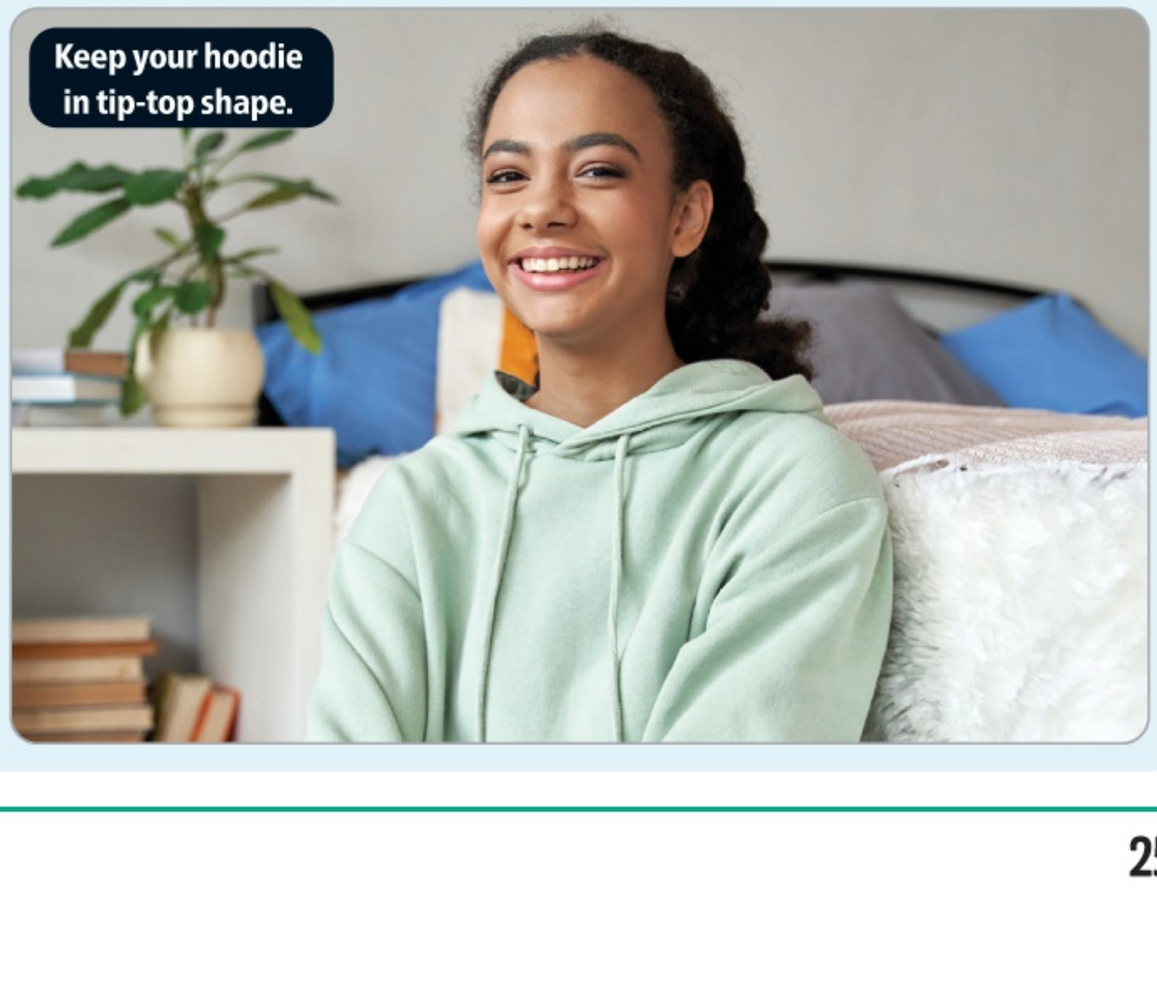
Instructions

1. Empty the can of beans into a colander under running water. Rinse and drain.
2. Add the oil to a medium pot over medium heat. Add the ham (if you're using it), the celery, carrot, onion, and garlic, and stir once or twice. Adjust the heat so the mixture sizzles without burning. Stir every minute or so, until everything looks a little darker than when you started and the vegetables are soft, about 5 to 10 minutes.
3. Add the Italian seasoning and stir a couple of times until you smell the aroma, less than a minute. Add the beans and 2 cups water or stock. Bring soup to a boil, then lower the heat so the bubbling slows down a bit and cook, stirring every few minutes, until vegetables are totally soft and the liquid thickens, 5 to 10 minutes.
4. Take the pot off the heat and use a slotted spoon to remove about ½ cup of beans and vegetables to a large plate. Break them up with a fork or potato masher. Return them to the pot. (This will give the soup a thicker texture.) Season with salt and pepper to taste. Makes 2 to 3 servings.

FROM THE BOOK HOW TO COOK EVERYTHING KIDS: HOW TO COOK EVERYTHING SERIES, BOOK 9 BY MARK BITTMAN; COPYRIGHT © 2024 BY MARK BITTMAN; PUBLISHED BY HARVEST, AN IMPRINT OF HARPERCOLLINS PUBLISHERS; REPRINTED BY PERMISSION; PHOTO BY GHAZALLE BADIOZAMANI; BOTTOM PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES

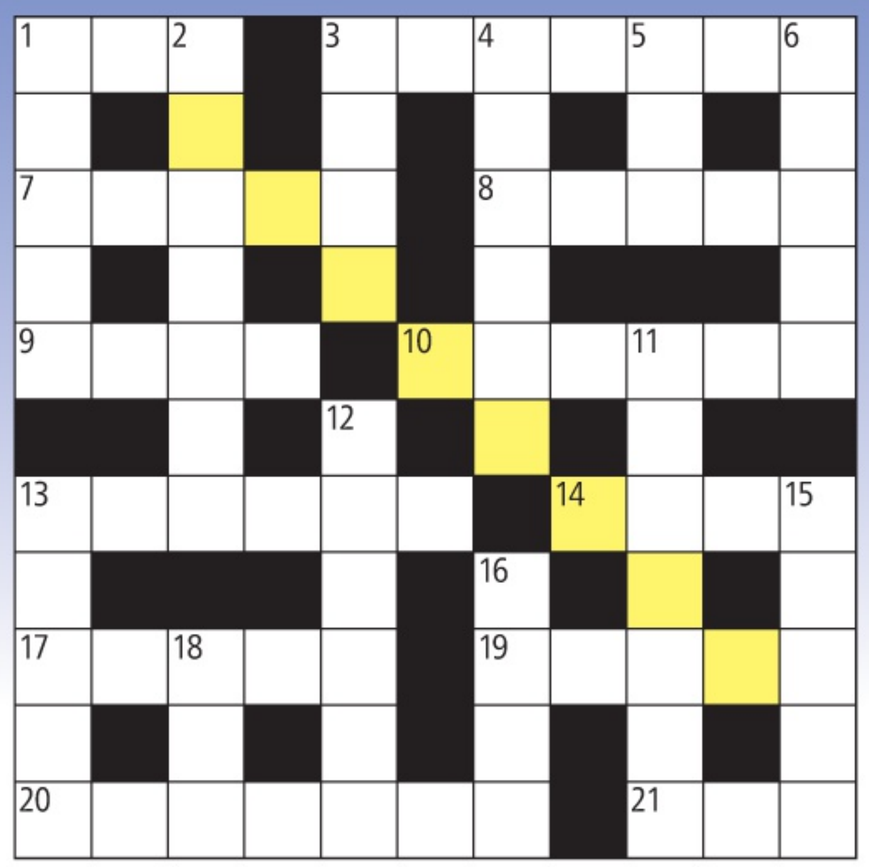
LIFE HACK MAKE YOUR FAVORITE HOODIES LAST LONGER

If you want to keep your favorite hooded sweatshirt looking great, it's important to care for it properly. First, check the care instructions on the label to make sure it's safe to put it in the washing machine. Avoid washing your hoodie after each wear, which can cause fabrics to lose their color and shape. Before washing, check for stains that may need stain remover. Then turn your hoodie inside out to protect any prints or logos from rubbing against the machine, zip up zippers, and gently tie drawstrings. Wash in cold water on a gentle cycle. Skip the dryer, and let your hoodie air-dry on a rack. When it's dry, you can fold it in half and drape it over the bar of a thick or padded hanger.



Keyword crossword

Once you have completed the crossword, transfer the letters in the yellow boxes, diagonally from top to bottom, into the boxes below to get the answer to the Keyword question.



ACROSS

1 Run at a leisurely pace
3 Person who saw a crime being committed
7 Feature of the hair in the movie *Brave*
8 Rounded shelter built from blocks of snow
9 What the "ugly duckling" grew up to be
10 Made a noise like an angry cat
13 Line connecting a circle's center to its edge
14 Items that Goldilocks tests last
17 Word that can follow "high" or "rocking"
19 With nothing inside
20 Salty, twisty snack
21 Diagram you may find on the optometrist's wall

DOWN

1 Some of the playing cards with faces
2 Ring of flowers and leaves worn on the head
3 Narrow-waisted flying insect
4 Fun fact like the ones in the Keyword question
5 Long, slender, sometimes electrified fish
6 *The ___ in the Stone* (story about young King Arthur)
11 Tallest part of a church's structure
12 Hard mineral also known as rock crystal
13 "And now for a brief ___" (summary of what happened)
15 A fashionable, trendy look, for example
16 Have an emotion
18 Tool for Paul Bunyan

Keyword question: The tune for "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" is also the tune for "Baa, Baa, Black Sheep" and the song known as the "what" song?

CODE CRACKER

ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 29.

In this coded list of tiny things, every letter has been replaced with a substitute. The same substitutions are used throughout the list. Hint: Every X here is an uncoded P. Use the letter patterns you find to crack the code. (NEED ANOTHER HINT? Check the bottom of the page.)

	P										
H	X	J	F	L		N	B		R	C	H	U

P		P	P						
X	N	X	X	Z		H	J	J	R

H	G	Q	U		F	W	Z	H	U	G	Q

B	W	C	V	U	B	Q	Z

THREE FOR ALL

Sort this list into three familiar three-part phrases, like THREE-RING CIRCUS or SALT LAKE CITY.

BULK BOX BAG BIG IN

STORE BROWN BUY PAPER

_____ _____ _____

_____ _____ _____

_____ _____ _____

Hit or miss

Place an X or O in each empty square so there are never more than three X's or O's together in a row, column, or diagonal. Hint: If you find three in a row of one letter, you can put the other letter into the spaces at either end.

		O		O	
		X		X	
X	O	O			
X		X		X	O
X			X	X	
				O	

Spot the difference

These two pictures of girls enjoying composting appear to be the same, but take a closer look. There are actually five differences. Can you see them?

PUZZLES BY PUZZABILITY

That's unbelievable!

The totally rad collection

A treasury of Ninja Turtles

After watching the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* cartoon in 1988, Dave Fawcett begged his parents for a turtle-themed birthday party. Now he is the proud owner of the world's largest collection of Ninja Turtles–themed items. An entire room of Fawcett's home, which he calls the "Turtle's Lair," is dedicated to the 2,195 objects he has gathered. They include comic books, sleeping bags, and lunch boxes, but his favorite item in the collection is a "Movie Star Mikey" figurine that his grandfather bought him.

The big winner

Paddling in a giant pumpkin

Gary Kristensen won the West Coast Giant Pumpkin Regatta, where he crossed the finish line inside a 936-pound pumpkin while dressed as Buddy from the movie *Elf*. Kristensen, who has entered the annual contest in Oregon since 2013, is passionate about vegetable voyages. Earlier this year, he paddled more than 58 miles in a giant gourd he grew himself—and earned the world record for longest journey by pumpkin boat. Kristensen said his recipe for success is "good seeds, good soil, good luck, hard work."

She set the bar high.

Pulling for a world record

The women's world record for completing the most pull-ups in one hour stood for nearly 10 years—until an Australian police officer named Jade Henderson used her super-strong arms and firm grip to break it. In the allotted time, she completed an average of 12 repetitions of the exercise per minute for a final total of 733. (The previous record was 725.) Afterward, Henderson said her hands were very sore, but she was very proud of herself for "pushing through" to the end to clinch the record.

Real or fake?

Was it Mission Im-paws-ible?

A bear break-in at the zoo

Workers at Sequoia Park Zoo in California had quite a fright when they spotted a surprise guest: a wild black bear pressing its nose against an enclosure. The wild bear seemed to introduce itself to the captive bears in the exhibit, according to zoo staff. It then began playing with their toys. The bear was escorted from the premises without trouble, but officials are baffled at how (and why) the mysterious visitor got past the zoo's 8-foot-high fence. Is this story true, or is it a bear-faced lie?*

*Real! Zoo staff believe the fuzzy intruder was about 18 months old, an age at which black bears are particularly curious. "Overall, he was a very polite visitor," said Christine Noel, a zoo supervisor.

GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS (2); AP; GETTY IMAGES (2); ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (2)

Your turn

Editor's note

In this week's cover story, we report on the results of our sixth annual Junior Voices survey (p12). Each year since we began publishing *The Week Junior* in 2020, we have teamed up with YouGov, a prominent polling firm, to ask children across the US for their opinions on a variety of topics. The results always fascinate us! This year, we focused on how often kids hear and talk about the news and how it makes them feel. We hope the results are interesting to you! As you read what the survey respondents had to say, we invite you to think about how you would answer the questions. If you have thoughts or opinions to share, we'd love to hear from you at *hello@theweekjunior.com*. I would especially enjoy knowing how you would answer the question in the pink box: If you could tell the adults of the world one thing, what would it be? I have no doubt you would have something amazing to say!

Andrea Barbalich
Editorial Director

Raising funds for cancer

Nora, 10, New York

"I love organizing sales in my neighborhood to raise money for causes I care about. Recently, I chose a cause that was close to my heart—Thyroid Cancer Survivor Association. My mom has thyroid cancer, so I decided to raise money for cancer research by making three different types of Rice Krispies treats. I sold my three favorite types: rainbow sprinkles, blueberry, and chocolate. It was a big success, and I have a goal of completing four more fundraising sales by the end of the year!"

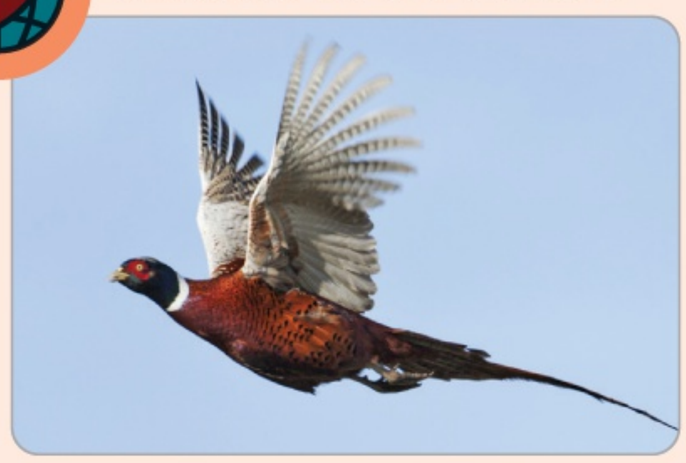
Have you done something interesting or raised money for a cause you care about? Whatever you're up to, we want to hear about it at *hello@theweekjunior.com*.

RIDDLE OF THE WEEK

What word is spelled right whenever it's spelled wrong?

"Wrong"

CHARITY OF THE WEEK



Pheasants Forever

This organization's mission is to support the pheasant population and their habitat. With 480,000 members and supporters throughout the US and Canada, Pheasants Forever has completed about 580,000 projects by raising funds and advocating for policy changes. In 2024, Pheasants Forever improved wildlife habitats on more than 2 million acres to help the birds. Find out more at pheasantsforever.org.

PHEASANTS FOREVER

ANNUAL COMPETITION

Enter our Winter Cover Contest!

If you would like to see your artwork on the cover of *The Week Junior*, here is your chance! We are accepting entries to our 2025 Winter Cover Contest. At right is the winning cover from our 2024 competition. The drawing form and consent form needed to enter can be found at kids.theweekjunior.com/activities. Entries will be judged on creativity, originality, and how well they reflect the winter theme and *The Week Junior*. Be sure your artwork is in color! When you're finished, have a parent fill out the consent form and email it with a digital image of your artwork to *covercontest@theweekjunior.com*. The deadline to apply is November 12!

Your turn

YOUR PHOTOS

We'd love to see pictures you've taken or pictures with you in them! Have an adult email them to us at *hello@theweekjunior.com*, along with anything you would like us to know about what's happening in the photo.

"In history class, I just learned about the Lost Colony." Isaiah, 9, California

"I made the biscuits from How To and ate them with jam. They were delicious." Sloane, 7, Pennsylvania

"I made the tahini and chickpea sweet potatoes with my mom. We liked them!" Teddy, 10, Illinois

Teacher OF THE WEEK

Teacher's Name: **Mr. Jeff Holtkamp**

School: **Willmar Middle School**

"Mr. Holtkamp is a great teacher. He helps kids love math, and now I love math more than I ever did. Mr. Holtkamp motivates students to try their best. I have never had a teacher who does so much for their students. I had him in the last hour of the day, and he was so energized that it did not feel like it was after a full day of school when we might be really tired."

Zoe, 12, Minnesota

Nominate your teacher for Teacher of the Week! Send your reason for the nomination, a photo of your teacher, and your school's name and address to *hello@theweekjunior.com*.

Puzzle answers (from page 26)

J	O	G		W	I	T	N	E	S	S
A		A		A		R		E		W
C	U	R	L	S		I	G	L	O	O
K		L		P		V				R
S	W	A	N		H	I	S	S	E	D
		N		Q		A		T		
R	A	D	I	U	S		B	E	D	S
E				A		F		E		T
C	H	A	I	R		E	M	P	T	Y
A		X		T		E		L		L
P	R	E	T	Z	E	L		E	Y	E

Keyword answer: alphabet

Code cracker
speck of dust
poppy seed
salt crystal
fruit fly

Three for all
big box store
brown paper bag
buy in bulk

X	O	O	X	O	O
O	O	X	X	X	O
X	O	O	X	O	X
X	X	X	O	X	O
X	O	X	X	X	O
O	X	O	O	O	X

Quiz answers (from page 30)

1 c) "Pull" and "fetch" **2** c) Pollen **3** True **4** New York **5** b) Sonic **6** False. It was named Bird of the Year in New Zealand. **7** c) Racing Louisville **8** *Dear New York* **9** a) Salmon **10** True **11** Spirit Fox **12** a) 1909 **13** b) Elliot **14** True **15** Pumpkin

We want to hear from you! To have your letters, photos, nominations, recommendations, or ideas considered for inclusion in the magazine, please include your first name, age, and state with your submission. By emailing your submission to us, you give *The Week Junior* consent to publish it in the magazine and online. Please get your parent/guardian's permission before sending anything to us.

GETTY IMAGES; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES

Quiz

How much of this week's news can you remember?

1 Which of these pairs of words was used in a recent study involving dogs and toys?

a) "Yes" and "no"
b) "Stop" and "go"
c) "Pull" and "fetch"

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

2 Scientists created a new sunscreen that is better for marine life using which of these ingredients?

a) Algae b) Coral c) Pollen

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

3 True or false? The *Baby-Sitters Club* book series is being turned into a stage musical.

True ☐ False ☐

4 This year's Rockefeller Center Christmas tree is from which US state?

---

5 An update to the video game Pac-Man World 2 Re-Pac will feature a level inspired by what character?

a) Donkey Kong b) Sonic c) Mario

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

6 True or false? The kārearea was named Bird of the Year in Australia.

True ☐ False ☐

7 Which soccer team claimed the final NWSL playoff spot on this season's Decision Day?

a) Gotham FC b) North Carolina Courage
c) Racing Louisville

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

8 What is the name of photographer Brandon Stanton's newest book?

13

1

ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 29.

12

6

4

9 What kind of fish was recently seen in the northern part of the Klamath River for the first time in more than 100 years?

a) Salmon b) Bass
c) Trout

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

10 True or false? The Los Angeles Dodgers are the first team to repeat as World Series champions since 2000.

True ☐ False ☐

11 In the book *Bunns Rabbit*, what is the name of the creature that first greets Bunns at the edge of the forest?

---

12 In what year did Japan first give cherry blossom trees to the US?

a) 1909
b) 1912
c) 1976

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

13 What is the name of Stevie's younger brother in the movie *In Your Dreams*?

a) Elijah
b) Elliot
c) Eli

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

14 True or false? According to a new study, Denisovans are the extinct human species that is most closely related to modern humans.

True ☐ False ☐

15 Gary Kristensen won a boating race using what vegetable as a vessel?

THE WEEK Junior

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GIFTS FOR EVERY READER'S WISH LIST: WHAT KIND OF READER ARE YOU?

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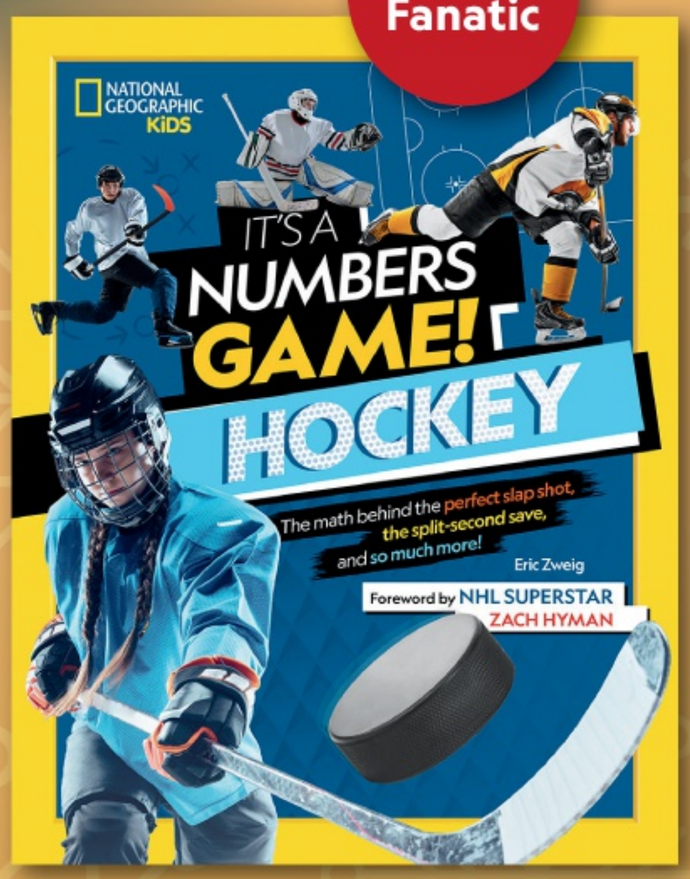
Sports Fanatic

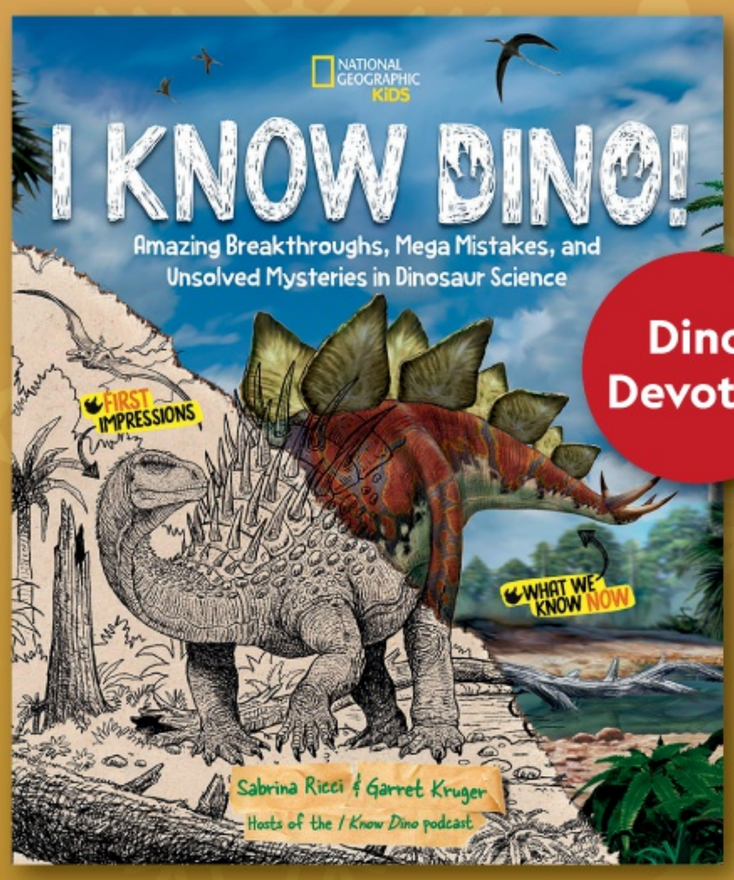


Fact Hound

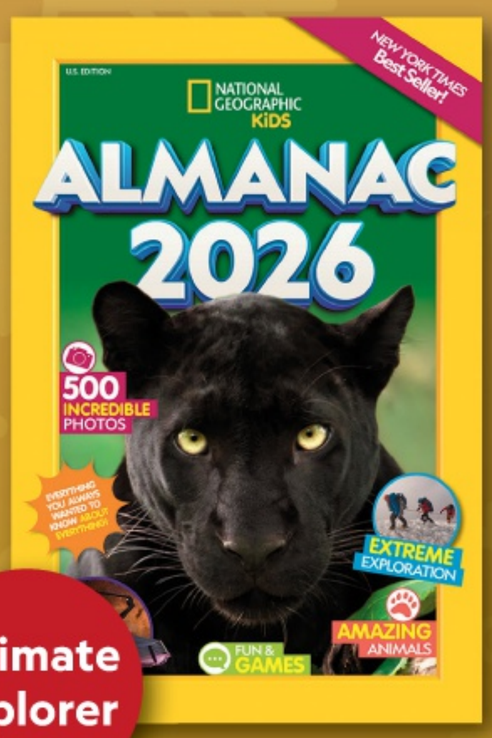
History Buff

Animal Lover

Dino Devotee



Ultimate Explorer



Space Voyager

Holiday Enthusiast

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